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Number 77

December 1990

Command HQ • Wing Commander • The Punisher

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Definitive Computer Game Magazine

Lucasfilm's *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*



Also in This Issue:

Star Control Tactics

Sound Board Survey

DragonStrike

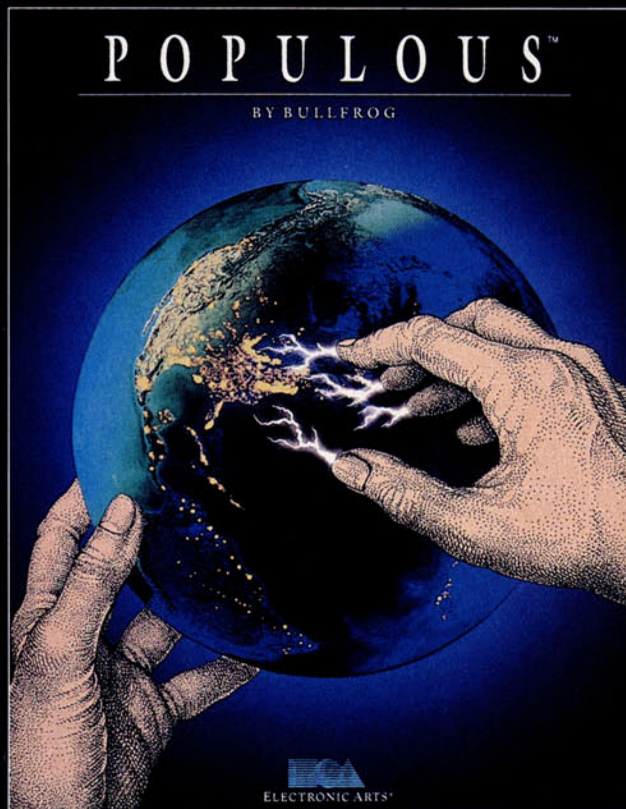
Stormovik SU-25

"Unquestionably the Game of the Year"

"A Truly Great Concept and Magnificent Implementation. Amen."
– Info

"The Most Original Game I Have Ever Seen... It is Unique!"
– PCM

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– Computing Now



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– Compute

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–Videogame & Computer Entertainment

"Populous is an Original"
– Computer Entertainer

POPULOUS

"You have always wanted to play God. Admit it. Now you can."

– New York Times, August 15, 1989

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USA

1990 Strategy Game of the Year
– Computer Gaming World

Best Strategy Game
– Software Publishers Association

Top Nine in '89
– Compute

#2 Simulation Game of All Time for the Amiga
– OMNI 1989

Most Innovative Software Title of '89
– Computer Entertainer

Computer Game of the Year
– Video Games & Computer Entertainment 1989

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EUROPE

Best Strategy Game
– Tilt D'Or 1989

Most Original Game
– European Industry Dinner 1989

Best Game of the Year
– Commodore User 1989

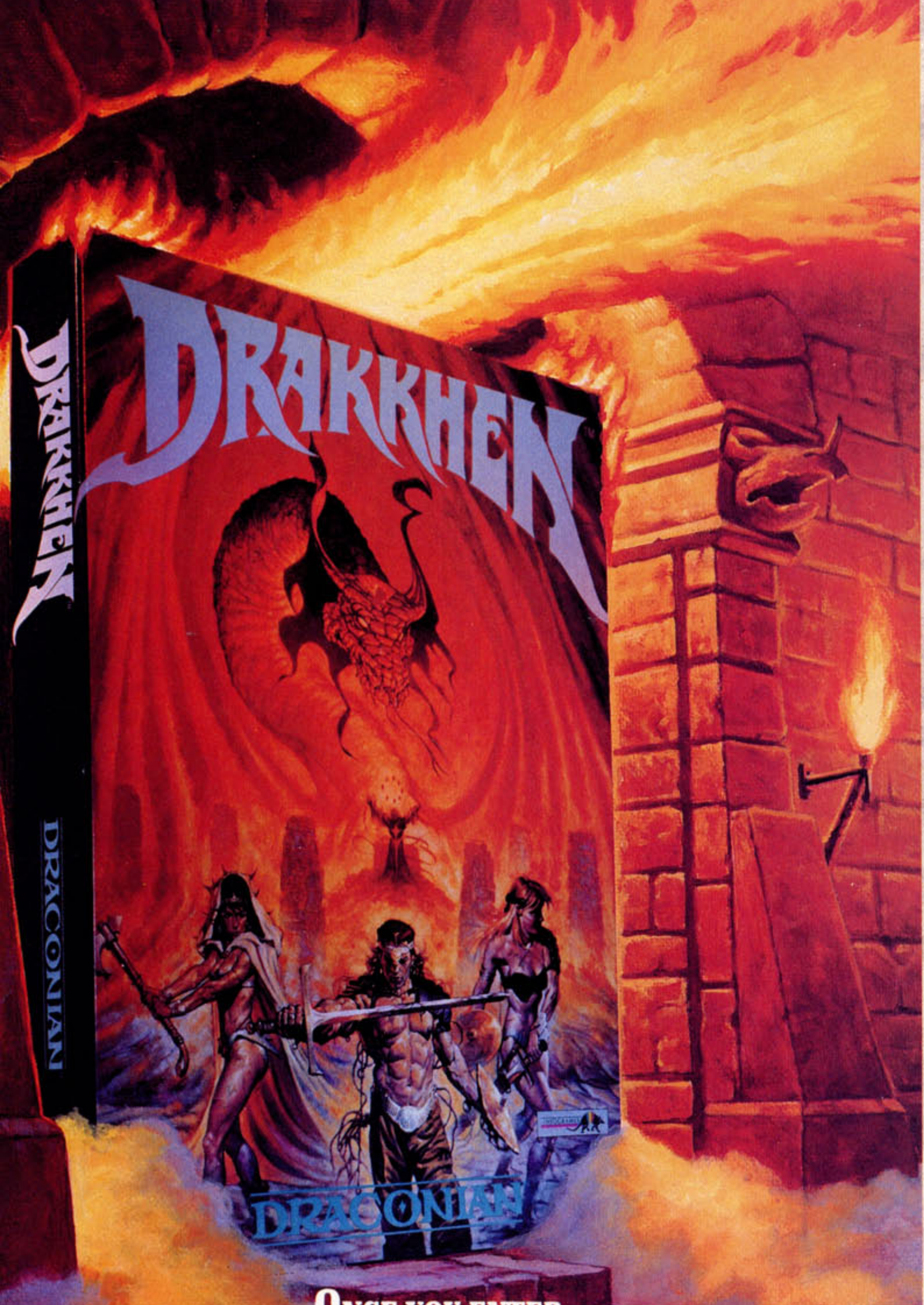
Best Strategy Game
– European Leisure Software Publishers Award 1990

Most Original Game
– European Leisure Software Publishers Award 1990

Game of the Year
– European Leisure Software Publishers Award 1990

Circle Reader Service #35

A MYSTICAL ODYSSEY OF DRAGONS, SORCERERS AND DEADLY REALISM









Dare to discover *Drakkhen*—the premier title in the Draconian line and the first role playing game that combines FRP themes with the most advanced technical wizardry ever!

You have been chosen to lead a hand-picked band of four brave adventurers on a treacherous journey. Your quest: to reclaim the mystical jewels from the eight dragon princes, resurrect the great dragon and restore the primeval realm—the source of all magic in the universe.

Never before has there been an adventure as vibrant with features as real as this:

- Three-dimensional graphics present a fantasy world in which you truly feel you're a part.
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DRACONIAN™

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Circle Reader Service # 20





"Heartbroke Motel?" Help Les Manley solve engaging puzzles. See genuine felt paintings. Animation so real your hips will gyrate.

"He Ain't Nothing But a Corn Dog." Can a man who wears polyester slacks and "Alf" pajamas impress the stunning Stella Hart?

CAUTION: The
Contain Gra







"I Can't Help Falling In Holes For You." Hot music. Hot colors. Hot dang. Search for The King recognizes over 1500 words.

Hold on to your parser. Accolade is about to redefine the world of animated graphic adventures with two phenomenal new games.

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"I Want a Hunk Of Burnin' Les." Just one of the beautiful babes our hero Les Manley could stumble upon. Got any cocoa butter?



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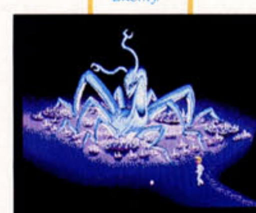
Welcome, fellow traveler, to the Canyons of Fear. Put away the reality you've known. You won't be needing it on this trip.

Following Scenes phic Material.

"...products which will push the envelope of adventure gaming." —Computer Gaming World



Altered Destiny was written and designed by Michael Berlyn, creator of Infidel™ and Suspended.™ Author of "The Eternal Enemy."



looking for high adventure, Accolade has two graphic examples.

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« Circle Reader Service #10 »

Discover the Boiling Pits. Altered Destiny immerses you in a realm of incredible landscapes. This definitely isn't Kansas.



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are property of their respective owners.

"The third in the trilogy of Test Drive products is finally here — and it's tougher, faster and flashier than ever before!"

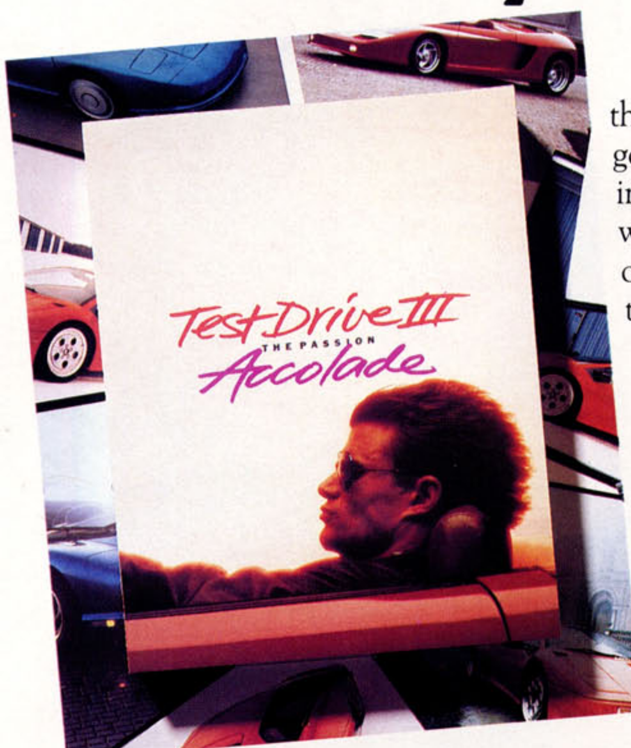


Futuristic and fast. Chevrolet's prototype CERV III is packed with down-the-road engineering and punch. 0 to 60 mph in 3.9 sec.

Hurry. They'r



New features include night driving, bad weather, working headlights and wipers, Instant Replay and a 360-degree Chase Car view.



Brace yourself *Test Drive* fans. *Test Drive III: The Passion*™ is unleashed.

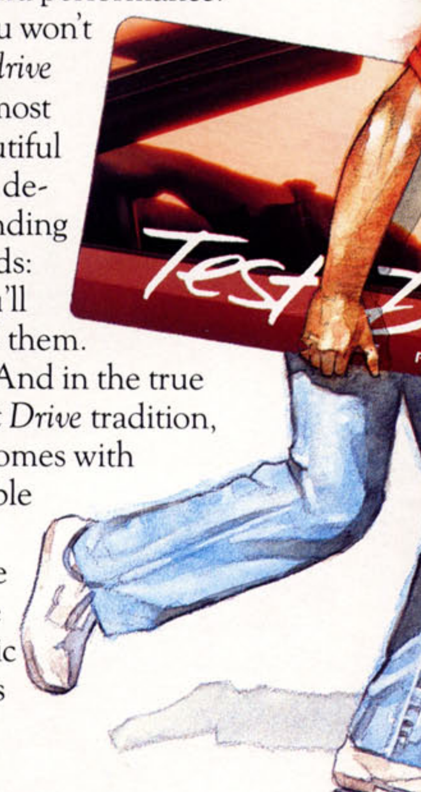
It's totally new. Totally hot. And it'll totally blow the doors off of any driving simulation on the market.

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You won't just *drive* the most beautiful and demanding roads: You'll *feel* them.

And in the true *Test Drive* tradition, TDIII comes with incredible cars.

Settle into the futuristic cockpits





Race head-to-head against the computer on branching roads that offer cross traffic, long tunnels and ocean straightaways.



Digitized dreams. Race sleek and sexy prototype sports cars through the most detailed and graphically "real" world of any driving game.

Actual game screens from IBM PC/VGA.



Unmatched realism. TD III allows you to
hrow your car in reverse, drive back the way
you came, take multiple routes – explore!

COMING SOON!
TDIII add-on disks, containing both scenery and cars.

e Going Fast.



of three exclusive and ultra-expensive prototype sports cars — the 225 mph Chevrolet CERV III,™ $2 million Pininfarina Mythos™ and the 485-horsepower Lamborghini Diablo.™

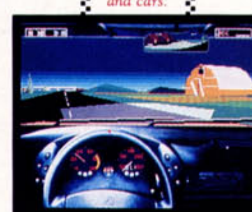
The Passion is hot. So hot that for a limited time, Accolade will give a free *Test Drive III* Dashboard Sun Shade for your own dream machine with every TDIII game purchased. See your participating retailer for details.

Test Drive III: The Passion. The fastest-selling driving games of all time just got faster.

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These free Test Drive III Dashboard Sun Shades won't last forever.

Complete sound and music support on all leading sound boards throughout the game. Add-on disks contain both scenery and cars.



Blow by some oceanfront property at 200 mph plus. Feel the CERV III hug the highway. It just doesn't get any better than this.

ACCOLADE™
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Circle Reader Service #11





Relive your greatest crashes on Instant Replay or check out your driving situation on the 360-degree Chase Car view with variable Zoom.



COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games for Ten Years

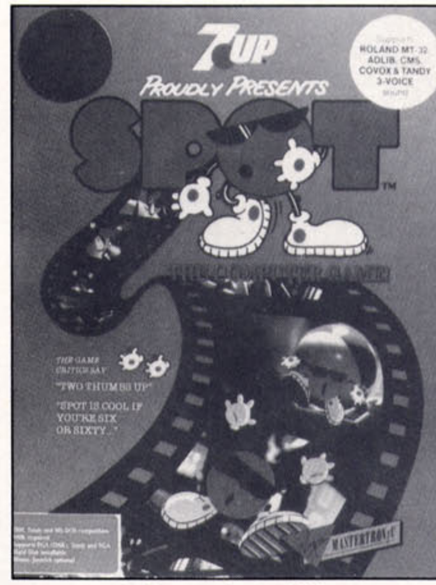
December 1990 **Number 77**



Star Control / pg 32



Secret Weapons... / pg 16



Spot / pg 88

Features

Departments



Challenge the Future!

Lead your squad of space marines into man–to–man combat in alien jungles, man–to–alien combat aboard hostile spacecraft, and wherever else your imagination can take you!

Omnitrend's classic tactical wargame now has a new look and an improved player interface!

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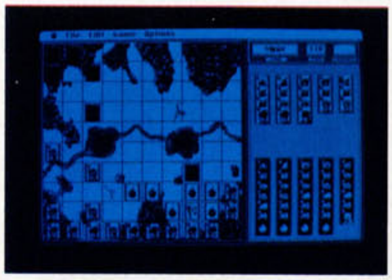
OMNITREND SOFTWARE

Actual photos from the IBM/VGA version. Other versions may vary.
Breach 2 is distributed by MicroProse Software, Inc.

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95128

STRATEGO: Fans of the classic "Stratego" boardgame from Milton Bradley will be very pleased to see the wonderful computer translation done by Accolade. A graphic delight featuring different styles of boards and pieces, plus a catalog of initial set-ups, three clever new tournament rules, and a campaign game. All give this game everything but (alas) a two-player option. IBM and Macintosh ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

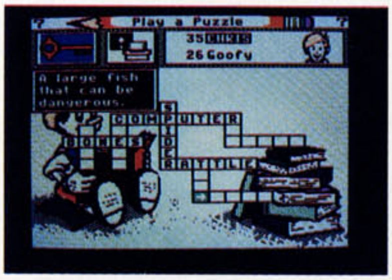
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Stratego



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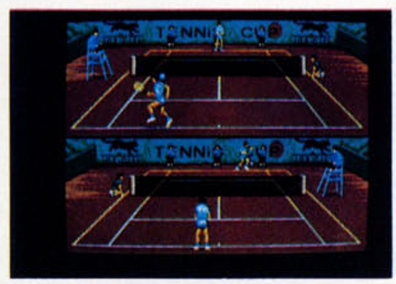
Mickey's Crossword Puzzle Maker



Checkmate



Matrix Marauders



Tennis Cup

Electronic Zoo
3431-A Benson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21227

TENNIS CUP: This game features just about every gimmick imaginable for the true tennis aficionado (spins, smashes, drop shots, four different styles of courts, 32 seeded opponents plus design-your-own opponents, doubles or single play for one or two players). Unfortunately, it's just so *hard* to hit the ball back unless one is adept at arcade games! Nice split screen effects for watching both sides of the court at once. IBM, Amiga and Atari ST ($39.95). Circle #2.

Interplay
3710 S. Susan, #100
Santa Ana, CA 92704

CHECKMATE: Yes, Virginia, there *is* a chess program that can beat the snot *[Ed. – Dave, change "snot" to "heck"]* out of you! Like Spock's chess computer on *Star Trek*, this program actually learns as it plays, adding more and more opening moves to its initial book of 300,000+. Fast-playing, with plenty to offer beginners and lots of clever features, this might be the strongest entry yet into the computer chess game market. IBM ($54.95). Circle #3.

Psygnosis Ltd.
South Harrington Buildings
Sefton Street, Liverpool L3 4BQ
United Kingdom

MATRIX MARAUDERS: This is a combination race and arcade game with plenty of shoot-'em-up action. While the graphics are not state of the art, the campaign game competition and null modem play capabilities give this game something to offer the market. Amiga. Circle Reader Service #4.

Silmarils
c/o Odyssey Software, Inc.
PO Box 367
N. Eastham, MA 02651

COLORADO: Made in France (with English and German rules for some reason), the scant documentation leaves

(Continued on page 126)

Circle Reader Service #43 »

J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Lord of the Rings™

Vol. I

Experience the Excitement and Wonder of Tolkien's Middle Earth!

"Interplay's newest role-player tackles the Tolkien trilogy with top-flight graphics, sound and a new play system that should make adventuring in Middle Earth more realistic than ever before."

–Video Games & Computer Entertainment

Interplay Productions presents the first role-playing computer game encompassing the epic fantasy world of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. Players journey through a world inhabited by hobbits, elves, dwarves, and wizards, falling in and out of the clutches of wolves, wargs, trolls, orcs, and ghosts, all the while protecting the one true ring from falling into the grasp of the evil Lord Sauron and his Dark Riders.



IBM screens pictured.

"Resplendent graphics and loving attention to the Tolkien lore prove that in The Lord of the Rings, Interplay is out to forge one ring game to rule them all!"



"But then the Dark Lord Sauron tricked the elves. The Rings gave their wearers great powers.

–Computer Gaming World



Combining the best elements of role-playing and graphic adventures, The Lord of the Rings, Vol. I uses stunning full screen, top-down, 256 color VGA graphics, smooth four directional scrolling, digitized sound, an easy to use point-and-click icon interface, and an off-line paragraph system to bring the depth of the true Tolkien experience to life via the computer.

"The Tolkien estate finally made the right choice with Interplay."

–Info Magazine

Interplay™

Interplay Productions
3710 S. Susan, Suite 100
Santa [illegible] CA 92704
(71[illegible]9-2411

To order The Lord Of the Rings, Vol. I, call 1-800-969-GAME. Available on MS-DOS for $54.95. Amiga coming soon.

The Rumor Bag

by Felix Ian Bond

(Continued from *CGW #76*)

The interrogator's eyes glistened with sadistic glee as he loomed over me. He flashed a bright light directly into my eyes as though he were trying to prove there was something worse to look at than CGA graphics. "And what do you know about **Spectrum HoloByte**'s Pearl Harbor game?"



"Look," I stammered, "I don't know anything. I heard Alan Zimm, the designer of *Action Stations* was working with them on such a project and I heard the marketing plan was to tie in with the 50th anniversary of the attack itself. Kind of a banzai marketing ploy trying to sneak up on a sleepy wargaming market if you ask me." He frowned as I uttered the last sentence. Guess my humor had bombed. My mind went into a tailspin and I knew I was sunk. *[Ed. – Groan.]*

Speaking of going into a *TaleSpin*, I suddenly remembered that Disney had just licensed the computer game rights to their hot new cartoon series to **Capcom**. **Capcom** is presumably planning on creating a Nintendo cartridge and possibly a disk-based game. In fact, they even managed to get the **GameBoy** rights to *DuckTales* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*. Fortunately, my captor didn't ask me anything about that or I would have sung like a mouseketeer on "Talent Roundup Day." He grabbed a large pot of what I presumed was a hot liquid and prepared to throw it on me if I didn't cooperate. "Now, what we really want to know," he glared with a expression that was even more hideous than that of a marketing executive after he's just read a negative review of one of his products, "is what happened to all those space games?"

I swallowed with great difficulty. "I don't suppose you mean *Star Fleet 2: Krellan Commander* (Version 1.5)? I mean, they're trying to get every known bug out of it." He shook his head slowly and prepared to dump the liquid on me. "Did you mean **Interstel**'s *Armada 2525*? They've postponed it until the first quarter of 1991." The pot moved inexorably toward me. "I can tell you about the secret mission disk for *Wing Commander*. It seems the Kilrathi have an ultimate weapon. Get it? That's the key to the secret mission. You have to destroy their ultimate weapon."

I guess it wasn't a good enough answer. I was suddenly soaked with more water than they'd pour on a girl named Bambi on a "Wet T-Shirt Night." I could have started swimming except for the fact that the seat they had placed me upon had started to rise toward the ceiling.

"Tell us about *Wing Commander 2*," my tormentor demanded.

"It's due in the first quarter of '91," I shouted as my chair rose ever higher. "It's going to be a stand-alone game and **Origin** might be doing a complete series using the game system." He frowned. The chair kept rising. "They're working on adding tailgunners," I shouted. It kept rising. "They're upgrading the technology of existing ships and adding new ships for this one." I was ducking as the chair neared the ceiling. "They're even kicking around the idea of placing a neutral alien race into the game. These aliens could either help you under certain conditions or join the Kilrathi under other conditions." I scrunched myself low in my chair and closed my eyes.

My interrogator laughed hideously as the ceiling opened and I found myself seated in front of the main bar in the Safe House. "Enjoying yourself?" asked the bartender. I opened my eyes and realized that Lord British, Mike Stackpole (of *Wasteland* fame), Dave Arneson (working on *Bard's Tale IV* for **Electronic Arts**) and Rick Mulligan (in charge of on-line games for **GEnie**) were all standing around laughing at me. Sitting upright in my chair, I tried to regain my normal stoic composure. I realized I'd been set up when I started chasing down this **Allen Varney Games** rumor.

"Come on, guys," I complained, "enough's enough. I'm a reporter, for goodness sake, not a spy. How am I supposed to write a column if you guys don't give me the straight scoop?"

They decided that was fair enough, so Stackpole told me this great story. It seems that some of the Phoenix Cardinals were attending a literacy rally at a local comics book shop and someone mentioned role-playing games. One of the running backs for the Cardinals was explaining what RPGs were to Dave Galloway, a defensive end for the Cards. "I get it," said Galloway, "I've been playing a computer game like that. It's called *Wasteland*." The football player turned to Stackpole and said, "Have you ever played *Wasteland*?"

Now, normally, you understand, Stackpole would have said something sarcastic like "Buy a vowel, guy! I wrote the game." But even Stackpole doesn't get sarcastic with a 250-pound lineman.

"It's a humorous situation," I admitted to Stackpole, "but it isn't the kind of stuff my editor looks for. Couldn't you tell me something about some of those secret projects at **Interplay**?" Wouldn't you know it? That was the *second* time I ever knew of Stackpole being speechless. All I knew of **Interplay**'s future plans was that they had completed a deal to publish European publisher **Delphine**'s sequel to *Future Wars*, *Operation Stealth* as a James Bond adventure. Only the U.S. version will utilize the James Bond license.

Lord British had news, however. "Good subjects," he jovially remarked, "I hath recently glanced a missive concerning the *Worlds of Ultima* series. Wouldst thou care to know the name of the ultimate bad guy?" When we all assented with good cheer (some with a hearty "Cheers!"), the sovereign of Britannia declared that Johann Spector™ will be the UBG throughout the series.

As the hour grew late, I asked if my restraints could be removed. The group of designers mumbled among themselves and finally, Lord British proclaimed that I might be released if I could offer one more bit of information. "All right, milord! But do not shoot the messenger, I prithee. One of thy mightiest competitors doth expect to spring forth with *Might and Magic III* in the late Spring." His majesty smiled as he signaled the rest to release me. He told me he actually hopes it's a major success. **CGW**


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Roberta Williams returns to your computer screen with the most wonderful King's Quest ever!
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When You're in Command, Command!

An Intelligence Scan Of Microplay's Command HQ

by Alan Emrich

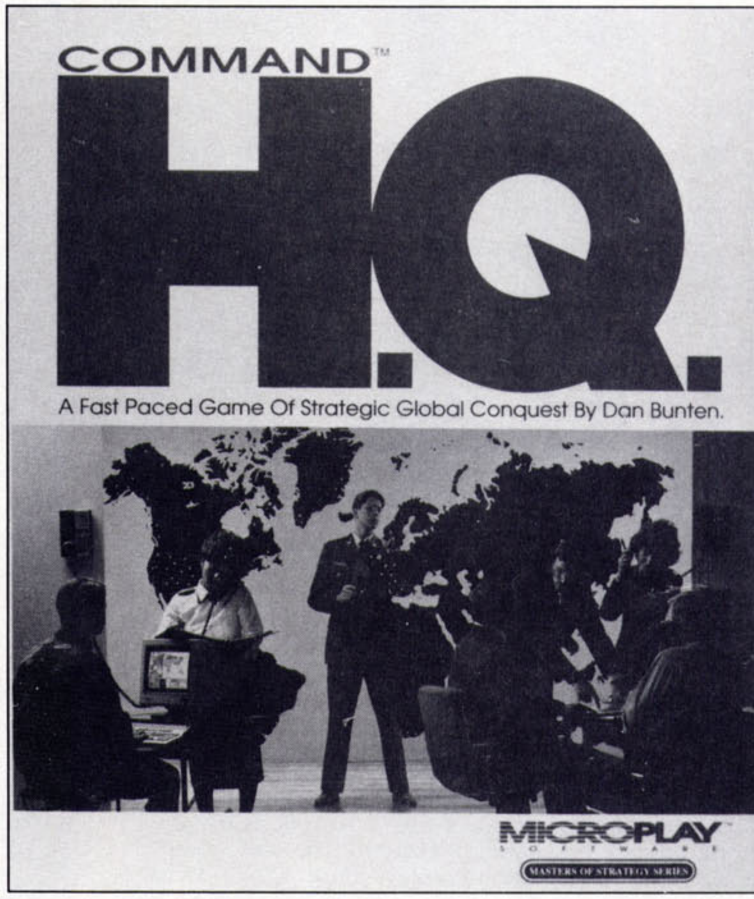
To the Commander-In-Chief, Allied Sector:

Our agent has returned from his clandestine operation deep within **Ozark Softscape**. *This mission was a complete success (codename "Ranger" has never failed us) and his G2 (military intelligence) report follows. Note that this report is being filed while* Command HQ *is still under construction (Alpha and Beta copies were examined), so some elements are subject to change. [End of message].*

A few hours prior, back in the debriefing room. . .

"Well, Ranger," the Commanding Officer (C.O.) began in his usual crisp, no-nonsense manner, "what did you find out from Operation Ozark?"

"Plenty, sir. We'd better brace for massive telephone calls. Christmas, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving Day — they'll seem light to the phone companies once this software is released. We could be looking at a complete collapse of telecommunications as we know it. An overload, sir. There's more there than we thought. A lot more. . ." With that, I began to explain the following:



Situation Report

Command HQ is a strategic level (armies, fleet and air forces) strategy game ("wargame," if you will) of global conflict in the 20th and 21st centuries. While a plethora of strategy options and unit types are available to participants (during both the actual wars and their cold war preludes), the interface is miraculously simple and the mechanics well explained in the simulation's documentation. With modem play as its heart and soul, *Command HQ* can be played two-player via direct calls, networking, at the same computer or, of course, solitaire.

TITLE:	Command HQ
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2 (Modem)
PRICE:	$59.95
PUBLISHER:	MicroProse Hunt Valley, MD

Global Perspective

As one views the monitor and takes in the map-at-a-glance view of the entire world, the enormity of global campaigning becomes apparent. Where are the objectives concentrated? Where will the vital maneuver choke points be? How should one's forces best be deployed and marshalled for attack and defense?

The world is a big place, and there are four distinct objectives on the *Command HQ* geography. Of primary concern are the two capitols, one belonging to each opponent. Like capturing the flag in *Stratego*, capturing an opponent's capitol wins the war.

Logistical Support

Nevertheless, wars are fought, above all, with money. To that end, the vital economic terrain of cities comes into play. Each city, in addition to offering defenders a combat advantage and a place to base one's air forces, produces $5,000,000 per turn. Bases, too, are an important terrain feature. Similar to cities in that they offer strategic anchors for defending one's position in addition to functioning as vital airbases in remote areas (which becomes important when "staging" aircraft to new locations), bases, however, generate no revenue.

Finally, there is oil. While of no consequence during the earlier scenarios, oil becomes a crucial element in the modern games. It is oil that allows the cities to contribute their revenue to the war effort. Oil keeps the troops marching and the air force flying. (Ships, however, are all "nuclear powered" and require no oil). When a shortage ensues and one's reserve is depleted, the consequences become rapidly apparent. While not enough to cause the collapse of the entire war effort (depending on the severity of the oil shortage), the "squeezing" effect on a player's war

(Continued on page 39)


GEAR UP.
BOMB BLAST SUIT
Shields you from explosions.
FLASHLIGHT
Illuminates underground passages.
MINES
Set them in key locations. Up to three per screen.
INGRAM MAC-II
Semi-automatic submachine gun. Silencer optional.
BERETTA M92F
Single action hand gun. Silencer optional.
BODY ARMOR
Will reduce damage by 50%.
ROCKET LAUNCHER
Destroy enemy equipment from a safe distance.
ANTIDOTE
Neutralizes poisons.
GAS MASK
Only means of survival in gassed out areas.
REMOTE CONTROL MISSILE
Guide it with your control pad.
COMPASS
Helps you navigate through uncharted deserts.
ANTENNA
Allows you to use transceiver despite enemy jamming devices.
TRANSCEIVER
This is your most valuable piece of equipment. With it, you'll receive vital information from headquarters telling you where to find essential weapons and supplies.
INFRARED GOGGLES
Used to detect infrared alarm sensors.
OXYGEN TANK
Keeps you breathing underwater.
MINE DETECTOR
Discovers location of enemy mines.
PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES
For perfectly timed explosions.
BINOCULARS
Allow you to see one screen ahead without risking your life.
GRENADE LAUNCHER
Launch deadly grenades into strategic locations.
IRON GLOVE
Allows you to locate hidden doors with a single punch.
METAL GEAR™
In this intense maze game, your mission is to destroy the ultimate weapon: METAL GEAR. You'll accomplish it by winding your way through five enemy strongholds, seeking vital information from hostages and searching for essential weapons and equipment, while occasionally tripping hidden alarms.
If you hope to survive, rely heavily on your transceiver, your map and your wits. And a word to the wise: don't believe everything you hear.
ULTRA® GAMES
ULTRA
METAL GEAR
Screen shown: IBM®
Screen shown: IBM®
Screen shown: Commodore®
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Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe

Infiltrating the Design Team

by Russell Sipe



To paraphrase the old Movietone newsreels "Larry Holland Marches On". First it was *Battlehawks 1942* (*CGW*'s Action Game of the Year 1989), then it was *Their Finest Hour* (*CGW*'s Action Game of the Year 1990). Now Larry has brought us another in his boffo line of hits: *The Secret Weapons of The Luftwaffe* (*SWOTL*).

Think back to the scene in Lucasfilm's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* when our hero, Indiana Jones, dukes it out with a World Wrestling Federation-sized Nazi while a Nazi flying wing taxied out of control as a backdrop. Lucasfilm has always been fascinated by that plane and their hero, Indiana. The box artwork for *SWOTL* (the full box, not just the painting reproduced here and on our cover) looks like it should be entitled "Indiana Jones and the Secret Weapons of The Luftwaffe". Hey, those guys in marketing at Lucasfilm Games know what they are doing, right? Indiana versus Nazis is a guaranteed marketing hit. OK, so they got you to pick up the box and look at it. Next, you turn the box over and see that while Indiana is no where to be found, the flying wing lives!

SWOTL recreates the daylight bombing raids in Germany from 1943 to the end of the war. In addition to exotic new planes such as the Me-262 jet fighter, Me-163 rocket plane, and Gotha 229 flying wing, you get to fly other favorites such as the P-51 Mustang, P-47 Thunderbolt, FW-190, and last but not least, the B-17 Flying Fortress.

There are numerous improvements that Holland has made in *SWOTL*. There is more detailed damage. Damage is allocated to various aircraft systems and flight/combat performance changes according to what kind of damage you sustain. Additionally, there are more visual clues to damage such as bullet holes, oil splattering on your windshield, engine fires, smoke, et.al. There is a more detailed world in *SWOTL*. The ground features are much better. Take a low run over a factory to see what we mean. Speaking of graphics, *SWOTL* is the first game in the series to support VGA graphics, which means more detailed planes, gradient skies, etc.

The flight dynamics are more realistic. This time around there is an expert mode which gives the player separate rudder control. By the way, for a real challenge, try surviving a tour of duty flying the squat little Me-163 rocket plane. It had skids for a landing gear! More pilots were killed learning to land the plane than were ever killed in combat. Landing a rocket plane on skids? Piece of cake!

Finally, there is a more detailed strategy game. As the German player you must allocate R&D (research & development) points in order to bring experiential technologies (such as jet aircraft) into being. The German also has the task of staging his various aircraft Gruppen within range of where he expects the Allies to attack. The US player must decide which German industries to attack (oil, transportation, aircraft assembly, aircraft engine, etc.).

In connection with the strategic element in the game, Lucasfilm Games brought in one of the leading US authorities on the Luftwaffe, Dr. Williamson Murray, author of *Strategy For Defeat: The Luftwaffe 1933-1945* as a consultant. In addition to his expertise in the history of the Luftwaffe, Dr. Murray also understands gaming (he is the faculty advisor for the Ohio State Wargaming Club). *CGW* was invited to sit in on a design session of *SWOTL*. In addition to "eavesdropping" on Larry Holland (designer) and Dr. Murray, we were invited to ask questions.

Here is a portion of that session:

SWOTL Design Session

Holland: *SWOTL* will have a strategic side to it. You will have control over the production and strategic disposition of forces. Therefore I want to build a simplified model on how the war economy in Ger-



Selecting targets for the day.



Watching a fellow B-17F get hit.





In a P-51, going after Me.262s (r) that just made a pass on a B-17 (l).

many worked and its implications for the Luftwaffe. Raw materials, manufacturing centers, the whole web of interconnected things. For example, in yesterday's session you mentioned the value there would have been if we could have destroyed Germany's electrification system. I want to identify what those important elements are so that the players af *SWOTL* can target different sectors of the economy.

Murray: From the mid 1930's on, the U.S. Army Air Force studied these aspects of economic warfare which you are asking about. These studies were put to use during WWII and again studied in great detail after the war was over. There are many things that we can draw on here which will make the game more realistic.

Very clearly oil was a crucial link in the German economic system. The problem was that to get at the oil effectively you needed a force structure that could attack a wide variety of targets. In 1943 that force structure wasn't big enough.

Holland: What about oil production?

Murray: Rumania had large oil fields that supplied the crude for the refineries. *[Ed. — The Ploesti raid will not be in* SWOTL*, as it falls outside of the scope of the game.]* Oil production in Germany, however, was synthetic-based (from coal). Great refineries such as Magdeburg processed coal into oil products.

Holland: Were the German refineries located at the coal deposits or was there a significant transportation factor involved?

Murray: There was a significant transportation factor. Magdeburg was located away from the Ruhr for a strategic reason; it was much deeper in the Reich, making it harder to attack.

I think that if the Allies had started hitting oil in 1943, particularly given the size of Leuna, they could have done some significant damage (because the Germans were desperately short of oil in 1942/43).

CGW: Is part of the reason that we did not attack the oil in '42/43 because we were not aware that the Germans were in such difficulty?

Murray: Yes.

CGW: How do you plan to handle that "fog of war" question in the game design?

Holland: I haven't worked that out at this point. Certain things, like oil, are obvious targets given the hindsight of history. However, how the Germans defend the oil could be variable, for example.

CGW: Is it possible that the game could include a variability on the importance of oil as opposed to hitting, say, transportation?

Holland: Yes, there is a whole web of interconnections in the German economy. That is what I am trying to work out. For example, oil is important but harder to hit in 1943 because the force structure is too small to penetrate to the inland refineries. Given that, I ask myself "what other segments of the German economy are linked to oil that could be neutralized given the force structure available?". One would be transportation. The railroads *are* accessible and are important targets themselves.

Murray: After the war it became apparent that the German electric industry was an enormous weak link. The dam raids in May 1943 are a very significant aspect to all of this. If they could have taken out that third dam, the Sorpe dam, then the Ruhr would have had no water and no electricity. *[Ed. — 617 Squadron used skip bombs to take out the Mohne and Eder dams on May 16, 1943. The attack against Sorpe dam did not succeed.]* If you could work that into the game it would be good.

The irony of the dam raids was the fact that after the Brits took out the two dams they marked them off their list. The air forces had an unwillingness to go back to targets after they hit them. After the dams were destroyed the Germans rebuilt them in summer and fall 1943. You've got thousands of workers, huge amounts of concrete being poured, platforms everywhere. All you needed was one 500-pound bomb to blow the whole thing to smithereens. Not a single aircraft was sent in. I don't know how you would work that into the game, but the incapacity or unwillingness to return to targets was significant.

Holland: That will be fairly easy. The targets are real targets. They have the capacity to rebuild. I wanted to put this into *Their Finest Hour* [but did not].

CGW: Why didn't the allies go back to these targets?

Murray: Inquiring minds were required [but were lacking]. After looking at the motion pictures from the air of the B-17 raids you see these *huge* bombing patterns on the ground, such as at Schweinfurt, and you say, "nothing lived. They beat the hell of the target, write it off". [Schweinfurt was attacked again, but not until three months later]. The problem is that the allies should have been asking themselves the question "What evidence do we have about the capacity of targets to regenerate themselves after substantial damage had been done?" If they had asked that question they could have looked at the example of Coventry, which is a major industrial center, and asked themselves "how quickly did the industries and city recover?" Unfortunately they did not pay attention to the lessons of history, even their own recent history in the Battle of Britain.

Holland: Having just done a Battle of Britain game, the parallels [with the strategic bombing offensive against Germany] are amazing. The Germans needed air superiority prior to the invasion of England. The Battle of Britain was Germany's attempt to gain that superiority. You can just flip that around to what the Allies wanted in 1944, which was essentially to gain air superiority, not just around the beaches but the whole area. This is a simple yet striking parallel between the two periods.

Murray: One of the great ironies of the war was that strategic bombing by itself was supposed to be decisive in and of itself in what it would do to the enemy

(Continued on page 123)

The Claws of the Tiger

Origin's Wing Commander

by Dennis Owens

TITLE:	Wing Commander
SYSTEM:	IBM with 640K Hard Drive Recommended
SOUND:	AdLib, Roland , Sound Blaster
PRICE:	$69.95
DESIGNER:	Chris Roberts
PUBLISHER:	Origin Austin, TX



From the opening scene with the conductor tapping his podium for the attention of his orchestra to the closing moments of the final mission's dynamic battle, *Wing Commander* offers a stirring display of stylish pacing, stunning graphics, inspiring sound and exhilarating space combat action. Pushing the envelope to the very edges of the galaxy, the latest in a long tradition of space combat simulations—stretching back before even **Rainbird**'s *Elite*—is a swirling, zero-G dash through blazing space cannon, dazzling plasma blasts and missiles going "zing."

Beautifully designed graphics, a storyline almost cinematic in scope, and a musical score alternately inspirational and laden with the *angst* of being far from home and isolated in deep space all combine to create a *stellar* warfare adventure in every sense of the word.

Wing Commander shares characteristics of *Star Fleet I* and *Deep Space*, but surpasses both—and indeed, all space flight warfare simulators—in every way imaginable, from variable views of the inside of different starfighters, to the explosions of enemy targets, the handling of space flight, and the amazingly poignant comments from NPCs as the player's character advances or ends up being demoted.

The soundtrack shifts from location to location, event to event and even intensifies or lessens during battle, according to the circumstances or to how the solar winds blow.

Wing Commander's fiction seems simple and fairly standard; the player's character begins as a rookie starfighter assigned to the most decorated spacecraft carrier in the Terran fleet. However, after the player names his character, assigns his "pilot" a callsign, and finds himself in the bar, everything standard about the fiction falls away. Familiar gaming devices such as the saved game (to be discussed later in the article) are so neatly tucked into the gameplay that, instead of interrupting the suspension of disbelief, they frequently add to it.

For instance, training in handling a starfighter, at which the character is already supposed to be, at least, minimally proficient, is afforded to the player through the use of a flight training simulator. Essentially, a video game within the larger fiction of *Wing Commander* (set up in the bar, no less, a la *The Last Starfighter*), the trainsim does serve a valuable purpose. It is there where, for a bargain price (free!), the character can ostensibly bone up on the latest tricks and moves of the enemy he will be facing (while the player is, in actuality, familiarizing himself with the basics of starfighter flight). But *Wing Commander* supports that fiction, because it is, after all, better to learn in the trainsim than flying unshielded and unarmored into the teeth of a Gratha.

In other areas, as well, the game ingeniously combines the needs of the player with the fiction of the character. The barracks area, for instance, is the only location in the game where the player's game can be saved. *Wing Commander* allows the player to access any of the game's eight save positions by pointing and clicking on any of eight beds arranged in the room. Clicking on the foot of the bed indicates that the player wants to sleep/save and clicking on the head of the bed indicates that the player wants to awaken/restore. *Wing Commander* is loaded with such inspired and player-friendly touches.

These, however, are just the peripheral characteristics of *Wing Commander*. At its heart, of course, is the spaceflight and the combat. It is when the starfighter leaves the carrier that the game really begins.

The enemy cat-like creatures called Kilrathi are good, shifty fliers, determined, maniacal and hostile. In fact, there can be no questions of politics in *Wing Commander*. The enemy *are* the enemy. They *will* destroy a character's starfighter without a moment's hesitation, given the opportunity. Their starships are powerful—in some instances, more powerful than any in the Terran fleet—and their pilots are generally skilled and well-disciplined.





In combat, combat in that cold, deep, dark and unforgiving space, ships' engines keen and wail as they pass. Thrusters hiss. Electrical systems spit as they burn out. Missiles and incoming laser blasts do, indeed, flash as they hit. Weapons have their signature noises as they are fired and Kilrathi ships (alas, unfortunately, Terran ships as well) explode in huge balloons of fire and shrapnel. The action is all bit-mapped and, at least at 16 Mhz and higher, is smooth and responsive.

The starfighter screen, variable between front, back, left and right, features all the necessary information: speed, weapons systems, enemy targets, a type of radar, communications videos (for machines with expanded memory) and, interestingly enough (again, almost an intuitive design decision), a display of the pilot's hand on the joystick which moves in conjunction with navigation and firing instructions (another "expanded memory"-only feature).

Although combat is frequent, it is not always desirable, especially when a distant transport needs an escort. Lest *Wing Commander* be perceived as little more than the video game disguised in the training simulator, it should be pointed out that the valued officer also displays good judgment. That is, he knows when to fight and when not to. So *Wing Commander* is, in some ways, a strategy game, as well.

After-Action Report

Both George Sanger and Dave Govett must be commended for their moving musical score. Further, this is the first of many games to be released by **Origin** which make use of branching musical phrases dependent upon game performance, a truly innovative feature. *[Ed. — We call it "subliminal interfacing."]*

Thus, *Wing Commander* is an innovative, intense, graphically lovely, and aesthetically pleasing game with enough action and variety to please almost every gamer. **CGW**

The Human Interface In *Wing Commander*: Some Food For Thought

One of the interesting features in *Wing Commander* is its fictional "campaign". The strategic map of Terran- and Kilrathi-controlled space gives players a solid visual frame of reference for where the battles are taking place and how close they are to the heart of the empires in conflict.

This "strategic situation" is an important element in the game. Which star the *Tiger Claw* settles at determines the nature of the missions which the player will conduct there. Are there friendly bases there to protect or enemy ones to attack? Is this a major jump point which must be secured? The significance of one's strategic location is described at two locations in the game: in the bar (as the player garners the latest scuttlebutt) and in the briefing room (where the missions are assigned).

This star map of the Vega Sector represents the skeletal bones upon which the entire storyline of *Wing Commander* hangs. No doubt *Wing Commander II* (rumor, rumor) will feature a different sector of space, new enemies which threaten humanity, and the thread of a new storyline running through it, giving the game its own life apart from the original.

It is at this point where one must take a good look at the Vega sector map included in the game, and notice that it is approximately two-thirds Terran space, and one-third Kilrathi space. The detectives out there will have probably deduced that there is a reason for this, and they are correct. There is a "tolerance" factor built into the game. New players, it is assumed (as this game has appeal beyond hard-core flight simulator fans), will make mistakes early on, fail in several missions, and want to keep campaigning to set things right. It speaks well of **Origin**, therefore, to include in their game a certain amount of "beginner fall-back positions" from which to keep playing. Another indicator of Origin's prediction of what player skills will average can be garnered from the Mission Board in the bar. Notice the different pilots ratios of missions flown to kills scored.

Now, let's talk about the real world. Too many players will cheat themselves out of discovering the *entire* campaign game that is *Wing Commander*. They do this every time they restart a saved game after a less than successful mission. It is the nature of many players to repeat a mission over and over "until they get it right" in order to garner all the medals and get the better fighters (and wingmen) right away. *These people are missing out on the extraordinary depth designed into this game!*

What does *CGW* propose for the countless times this situation is presented in these sorts of games? An "auto save" feature after returning home from each mission would do the trick. Before the mission debriefing, the game would automatically save over that player's previous position, without the opportunity to repeat the last mission. In this way, an "honest" campaign is assured, and players will have to fight their own learning curve with the different elements of the game, as well as the computer enemy in space.

Over There

Murder and Mayhem

by Paul Rigby



Dragonflight



Conquerer

When *Dungeon Master* arrived on the scene, everybody sat back and awaited the arrival of the stream of clones that would surely appear on the coattails of **FTL**. Two clones have already appeared in this column, *Xenomorph* and *BSS Jane Seymour*. Both, strangely enough, removed from the usual medieval-type fantasy world and based in the outer reaches of space. The space race really is on, however, because we now have a third *Dungeon Master* clone based in, you guessed it, the wild black yonder.

From UK-based **Core Design** comes *Corporation*, an adventure that places you in the guise of a Zodiac agent (espionage a specialty) in the Libra chapter (signifying balance). The latest area of Zodiac interest is the UCC, famous for its range of robots used in the home, industry and in agriculture. However, news has reached you that, via biogenetic research, the UCC is developing the ultimate killing machine. This, of course, must be stopped. However, such is the delicate nature of the "problem" and the importance of the UCC to the planetary economy, the matter must to be dealt with in a subtle manner. You must infiltrate the corporation complex, therefore, and remove the embryo which will herald the arrival of the killer. Only then will the UCC be persuaded to desist from their crazy research scheme.

Seen in a first-person perspective, *Corporation* includes some interesting natural light effects, realistic movement (characters "roll" when they move instead of gliding, and turning can be achieved on a curve instead of the usual 90-degree turn). Even the animation for monsters/creatures/aliens is smooth and the graphic and aural quality promises to be high. Available now on Amiga/ST for £24.99 and for the PC in February '91, £29.99.

Murder or *Moider*, as this game is likely to be renamed in the States (just kidding), is a sort of souped-up *Clue*-type game played in a 3D isometric environment. Using period-style gray-scale graphics (with spot sound effects such as taps dripping, etc.), you play an amateur sleuth who has two hours to solve a variety of individual murders, all of which are set in an Edwardian-style house.

Choosing the murder of your choice is done by selecting a date shown on-screen (1914-1942). One of eight different houses is selected, from one of four skill levels (novice to super sleuth), and you can see a mini-portrait of yourself before you dive into the game. (This portrait can be altered to your liking, though, via a simplified paint routine.).

During the game you will see the wandering characters who make up the occupants of the house, plus the dear departed lying on the floor. Clicking on NPCs brings up a picture of the same, along with their stats, name, portrait and inventory. You can engage them in conversation in order to ask them about other people or objects you may find lying around.

You have the ability to make notes, cross-examine, and store fingerprints for future reference. The maximum number of rooms in each mystery is 64; up to 36 objects can be "active"; and 12-28 characters may make up the cast. After you have checked out the possible suspects and murder weapons, you can accuse someone. Available now for the Amiga and ST, from UK software house **US Gold**, for £24.99.

Operation Stealth is the second game in the French software house **Delphine**'s animated graphic adventure series (the first, of course, being *Future Wars*).

You play Agent John Glames on the trail of a stolen Stealth fighter. After an excellent introductory sequence (showing the theft of the fighter by the enemy pilot), the game shifts to an airport where the game begins in earnest.

As in *Future Wars*, the action is very much reminiscent of a Sierra game. Also, the command menu still consists of six options: Examine, Take, Inventory, Use, Operate & Speak. The good thing about this menu is that it is sensitive to the mouse pointer. You can, therefore, have the mouse pointer anywhere on the screen and if you press the right mouse button the mini-menu will always open next to the pointer.

One of the criticisms of *Future Wars* was that you needed to move your char-

(Continued on page 118)

THESE PIRATES HAVE TONGUES AS SHARP AS THEIR SWORDS.



Lucasfilm™ Games' swashbuckling new graphic adventure lets you trade insults with some of the saltiest seamen to ever sail the seven seas.

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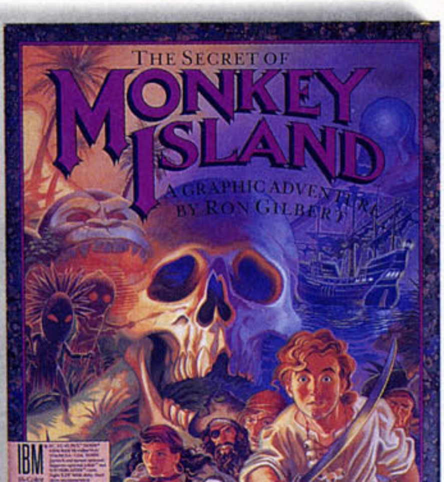
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Circle Reader Service #49

Flights of Fantasy

DragonStrike *from Strategic Simulations*

by H. E. Dille

Mustafa's boots were two shades whiter from the dust on the plains of Neraka. A land once green and fertile, it now lay wasted, its soil parched and cracked by Dragon's breath. A light rain began to fall, splattering in ugly dark clots, hesitant to enter the arid soil. Like the gods, Mustafa felt tears in his heart, tears of remembrance for his home land of Solomnia . . . and tears of bitterness for brothers lost in the skies above Kyrnn. Fear, once a stranger to the Knights of Solomnia, crept in the shadows of his thoughts, unspoken lest it gain life. "How easily the Dragon Highlord unseated me just yesterday . . .," he thought, fingering his Ring of Featherfall absently.

Rolling thunder clouds eclipsed the horizon. Mustafa turned to Thew, an ancient Gold Dragon, and began the ritual of adjusting the girths on his saddle. Both rider and mount sensed the presence of the flying citadel within the maelstrom that approached, a monstrosity held aloft by unspeakable magic. Thew's nostrils flared as the flat stench of the old Red Dragons reached them, borne on an ill wind. Mustafa stroked the quivering flank of his friend, taking care to avoid the fresh scars, which were all too plentiful. "Yes, old Thew, I feel your anticipation. It will not be long."

Straddling the Gold, Mustafa cinched the ring that bound the Dragonlance to his saddle and urged Thew skyward. With two thunderous flaps of his wings, the Gold Dragon sprung into the air, his long neck strained forward to catch a first glimpse of his adversaries. Mustafa uttered a small prayer, quickly swept away by the wind whipping through his hair.

The success of fantasy, in any of its forms, is often dependent on wholly and completely immersing its participants in an alien environment. Prose, no matter how vivid, requires readers to visualize and use their imagination to fill the tapestry of fantasy worlds. Pen-and-paper games provide interactivity, but are even more dependant on the minds of the players to suspend reality. Computer RPGs, such as *Ultima VI*, have become increasingly able to depict believable universes, in which fantasy players interact (more or less) freely with the story's world. Enter *DragonStrike*, **SSI**'s latest addition to their *AD&D* gold box line (*previewed in CGW #71*). Unlike its predecessors, which focused upon role-playing and "quest busting," *DragonStrike* is a first-person perspective of tactical air combat in the Dragon-filled skies of Krynn (setting of the *DragonLance* books).

Title:	DragonStrike
Systems:	Amiga, C-64, and IBM
Price:	$49.95 (C-64, $39.95)
Developer:	Westwood Associates
Publisher:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Sunnyvale, CA



Bo Knows Dragons (Do You?)

Before strapping on one's Nikes and Solomnic plate armor, it's always a good idea to know what to expect. Fortunately, SSI has provided novice players with a concise and comprehensive primer for Dragon riders. The game's manual clearly delineates how to control one's mount via keyboard, joystick or mouse. Keyboard commands may be customized to suit individual tastes, and all control modes interface smoothly with the program. For the most elegant and efficient flight control, this reviewer recommends using a mouse.

"Never heard of a Draconian," you say? Not to worry. Each type of adversary one might encounter is explained in sufficient detail to gather an appreciation for its strengths and weaknesses. Twenty separate foes are depicted, including juvenile, mature and ancient types of each of the Evil Dragons: White, Black, Green, Blue and Red. Each is rated for maneuverability (turn, climb rate and speed), damage, hitpoints and armor class. Happily, the latter categories are transparent to the player, randomized and manipulated entirely within the program. One does not know exactly how effective their mount's bite attack really was. To this end, one can expect to find an occasional "tough" Dragon who seemingly brushes a Cone of Fire attack. By keeping damage, hitpoints and armor class hidden throughout the game, an element of "fog of war" is preserved.

By virtue of their nature, some Dragons are immune to certain breath weapons (i.e., Silver Dragons are unaffected by the Cone of Frost from White Dragons). Fortunately for the player, each of the good Dragons (Bronze, Silver and Gold) also possess secondary breath weapons. Although of shorter range, these gas clouds are most useful for ridding one's tail of unwanted pursuers. To accomplish this, use the rear view to determine when an opponent is "on your six" and closing for the kill.

Simply breathe and fly through the cloud created by the secondary weapon. Generally, the Evil Dragon will not be able to avoid the cloud and will take damage accordingly. Paralyzation gas is best used when flying at low altitude because of the short duration of its affect. At high altitudes, opponents under its effect will often recover prior to striking the ground.



Bernoulli, A Solomnic Knight?!

There are many similarities to dragon-riding and air-to-air tactics in aircraft. Altitude and airspeed are still the staples of maneuver. Try to meet oncoming foes from a slightly higher altitude in order to get in a good claw rake and perhaps dismount their rider. For this same reason, don't fly too low into an attack.



Maintaining sufficient airspeed is also vital to opening the range after an attack. It is absolutely necessary to open range in order to allow one's breath weapon to recharge or to be able to maneuver for an advantageous position for a follow-up attack. Fuel consumption, which rarely plays a factor in most flight simulators, is replicated in *DragonStrike* in the form of the "power bar," which drops as the Dragon expends energy to climb or maneuver. When this reading gets too low, it's necessary to glide for a while to let one's mount to "catch its breath."



Speaking of breath, once a Dragon uses its breath weapon, it takes some time to recharge it. In terms of game tactics, this means that the best time to make an attack run is right after one's opponent breathes. This is not always possible, however, as one may face up to nine opponents simultaneously. When so engaged, the Dragonlance becomes the weapon of choice, as crossing targets are often difficult to lead for breath attacks. The lance may be replaced by a set of cross hairs, which allow somewhat easier targeting of the breath weapon, but also cause a depth perception problem for targeting the lance itself.

What's In A Name?

Sidar, a mature Bronze Dragon, will initially accompany the player into battle against two White Dragon scouts. This mission should familiarize players with all the mechanics of the simulation and provide a quick decisive victory as well. It is possible to finish the game while advancing to the title of "Lord Warrior" within the Order of the Crown, but this reviewer advocates transferring to the Orders of the Sword and Rose as soon as they are offered (it's the only way to ride the more powerful Silver and Gold Dragons). Completing the game as a Knight of the Sword yields the title of "Lord Clerist." while doing so as a Knight of the Rose makes one a "High Justice."

Each mission is prefaced by a briefing and some static artwork which, in VGA, rivals the best in fantasy art this reviewer has seen. The missions become increasingly difficult as one progresses through the orders of knighthood. Enemies become larger, stronger, more cunning and more numerous. One might be surprised by unexpected occurrences, such as lancing a gas spore and having it blow up in one's face. Also, it is likely that experienced riders will see the spectre of the dreaded Death Dragon rising to give combat (immune to all breath weapons and usually requiring several lance hits to kill). Undaunted players also have the option of designing their own missions against up to ninety-nine opponents (all of a single kind, with a maximum of nine on screen at a time).

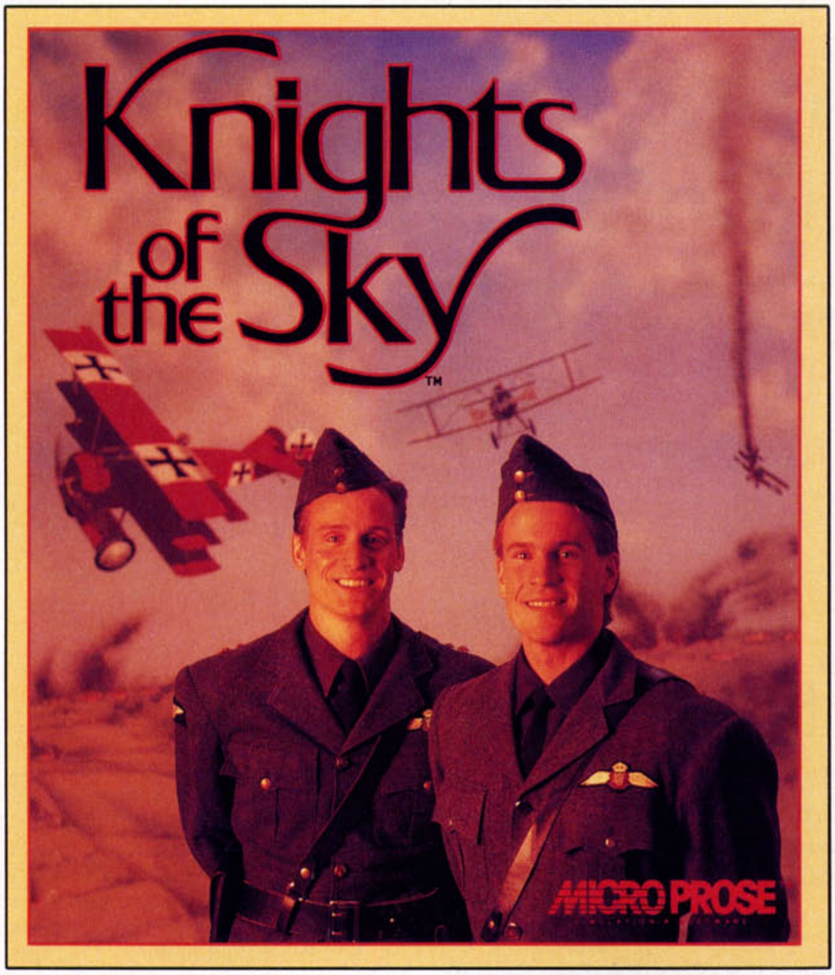
The Dragon's Tail

The essence of good interactive fantasy is to provide players the ability to interject their personality into the character and therefore, develop an affinity for the persona as a healthy, imaginative extension of themselves. This reviewer has witnessed pen-and-paper players lapse into catatonic states or become manic-depressive at the loss of a "favorite" character to the ruthless minions of a sadistic Dungeon Master (why do you think computer RPG's have "save game" features?). In fact, one of the nice developments within the computer RPG genre has been the ability to port characters from game to game so that favorite characters did not have to be abandoned.

Although *DragonStrike* does not portend to be a role-playing game in the true sense, it *is* interactive and it *is* fantasy. How difficult would it have been to allow players to port their own characters into the game? Certainly nothing in the code precluded a *Champions of Krynn* character from straddling a Dragon's back. Had this been allowed, players would feel a greater pang at the sight of the dismounted warrior plummeting to his death, as well as greater joy at promotions and bestowments of magical items. Taking those same characters back into a new module of *AD&D* would not have been difficult, either. One can only hope for these inclusions in an update or sequel.

What do these minor shortcomings mean to the success of *DragonStrike* as currently marketed? Hopefully, nothing. It is a superlative and innovative product and it deserves to be recognized as such. It is a hybrid that appeals to both fantasy gamers and simulation enthusiasts with equal fervor. **CGW**

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THE BEST OF THE PAST

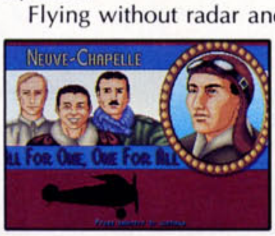
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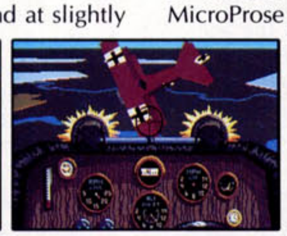
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Future Directions In Computer Entertainment

They call it "The Big Easy," but as the movers and shakers in the computer software industry gathered in New Orleans for the annual Fall Conference of the Software Publishers Association, accurate projections for the future were *not* "easy" to come by. Some saw the future in optical storage (CD-ROM, CD-I, CDTV, DVI or Laser Disc-Interactive). Others saw 16-bit game machines like **Sega**'s Genesis machine or next year's expected debut of **Nintendo**'s Super Famicom into the American market as low-risk means to broaden the market for entertainment software. Still others were so optimistic about the PS/1's fast start in the market that they felt that MS-DOS market for entertainment software would get even stronger.

Merger Mania

There was plenty of talk about a confluence of the video game and computer game industry. Executives on both sides are recognizing that both sides of the industry deal with *entertainment* and both sides expect that there will be some kind of conjunction between the two types of platforms in the future. Allan Epstein of **Accolade** noted that video game systems are becoming more capable. He expects more entertainment software publishers on the "floppy" side to move into the video game market, but observes that there is still a substantial difference in terms of audience and, hence, the types of games that do well. Epstein observed that products which play very well on video game systems appear "inferior" on personal computers because of the latter's use of small screens, lousy joysticks and horrible sound compared to the larger television screens, hand-held controllers and television sound with the video game machines.

There was plenty of talk about a confluence of the video game and computer game industry.

Most software executives saw the video game platforms as a chance to "port down" rather than an opportunity to convert software from video game to floppy disk. Lt. Col. "Wild Bill" Stealey of **Microprose** spoke directly to transferring computer games to other platforms when he commented that "All of our current product is being produced with a view toward video game and coin-op versions."

Emil Heidkamp of **Konami** sees the opportunity as working both ways, but he observed that the straight conversions of **Konami**'s early efforts did not work in the floppy market. Instead, he stated that **Konami** is committed to developing PC-oriented software because, "We really believe that, somewhere down the line, maybe in two or three years, PC software and video game software (possibly with CD-ROM-based platforms) will come together on a collision course." Reflecting on the softening of the pure video game market, Heidkamp observed that "[profit] margins are better on PC software [than on cartridge development], so the PC is going to continue to be a large part of the market." Such a statement by one of the leading, if not *the* leading, **Nintendo** publishers should make IBM computer gamers breathe more easily. Rather than perceiving the dedicated game machines as a threat, Heidkamp urged software publishers to look at games like Hollywood looks at films (viable products in many forms: theatrical, cable, videotape and Spectravision).

This confluence of entertainment software and computing systems was variously referred to in the course of the conference as a collision, fusion, and marriage. In the long run, it appears that a majority of software publishers hope that CD storage may bring all the platforms together like VHS brought the videotape industry together.

Nintendo Marches On!

While one would have had to have been exiled to Siberia in order to have missed the cultural impact of the first-generation **Nintendo** machine, time marches steadily onward. Yet the Big N has *not* been sitting idly, in spite of **Sega**'s introduction of the Genesis machine and **NEC**'s unveiling of the TurboGrafx 16. Nintendo continues to improve its technology. For one thing, the size of the game cartridges themselves have increased geometrically. *Super Mario Brothers 3* is a three megabit cartridge


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(that's bit, not byte, so you have to divide by 8 in order to compare the size of the cartridge to personal computer memory) and many of the games slated for the first quarter of 1991 are four megabit cartridges. The company has continually upgraded its MMC chips: The MMC 2 allowed them to increase character size; the MMC 3 chip brought vertical scrolling; and the MMC 6 chip considerably improved screen handling. The challenge for **Nintendo** has always been to remain user-friendly while upgrading technology. At the same time, the company has always believed that the price point is critical.

The goal at **Nintendo** has always been technology for the masses (millions), not the few (thousands). Thus, the eight bit **NES** system has penetrated to 30% of American households compared to a maximum of 23% penetration of computers counting all other platforms together. Where, then, is the Big N going? Bill White of **Nintendo**'s emerging technologies group says that in the near future, we'll see the 16-bit system, networking (they may call it play phone), and CD-ROM. In the far future, **Nintendo** has not ruled out involvement in DV-I, CD-I and virtual reality. The key to making any technology work according to **Nintendo**'s formula is relative simplicity for the user combined with high perceived value.

Apple's Forbidden Fruit

This year's Fall Conference was much more upbeat than the one in Montreal, Quebec during the Fall of 1989. Entertainment software sales were up 32% in the first six months over the previous year and even conservative estimates place the annual growth at 18% or higher. There were numerous companies who had thought the market was declining but discovered that there were possibilities for new growth this year. This is primarily because inventory has been carefully controlled on the publisher side, the retail stores have been better about stocking the shelves and retail prices have not been as subject to "cut-throat" discounting to the degree they were in 1989. It is probably also due to the fact that the floppy disk side of the entertainment software market is predominantly divided into two dominant formats: MS-DOS (65% of the market) and Amiga (10% of the market). All other formats are below 10% and declining.

The worst news for some is the fact that the "so-called" low-cost Macintosh is "too little, too late." Apple unveiled its three newest Macintosh lines at the SPA meeting, but the new machines were greeted with skepticism. Computer gamers and home users are not going to want to buy the Macintosh Classic (barely under $1,000 list price) because it is totally black and white, has no hard disk (although one can expand it for $500 more) and only offers slightly more speed (about 25%) than the Mac Plus. The Macintosh LC (presumably standing for "Low Cost," though some wags describe it as meaning "Last Chance") *does* offer color and a 40MB hard disk with 68020 microprocessor and 2MB of RAM at $2500, but customers will have to shell out an additional $500+ for the color monitor, bringing the price to over $3,000 for a machine many will compare unfavorably to the IBM PS/1 with VGA at around $2,000. Add another $1,000 or $2,000 and it is possible to purchase the Macintosh IIsi ("Simply Irresistable," says Apple). The latter has a 20Mhz 68030 microprocessor, allows implementation of UNIX applications, has built-in video support for Apple monitors and comes standard with a microphone useful for voice mail and document applications.

"[Profit] margins are better on PC software [than on cartridge development], so the PC is going to continue to be a large part of the market." (Emil Heidkamp, Konami)

However, there is worse news, even for those who would still consider spending the extra money to purchase a Macintosh LC or IIsi as a game machine. It seems that many developers asked Apple to include a joystick capacity on the new machines. Apple refused, one executive allegedly answering, "No, then people will think this is a game machine."

No Shame, Game Machine

Unfortunately, Apple is not the only hardware manufacturer (software executives often call them "iron makers") that is loathe to admit that people play games on their machines. IBM's Anthony E. Santelli (Vice President in charge of New Business Development) commented on how seven out of ten customers for their new PS/1 were opting to pay an additional $500 for VGA graphics and how the audio/joystick accessory was selling extremely well. Then he proceeded to state that people do *not* buy computers to play games. He stated that people buy game machines to play games and buy personal computers to shift time (i.e. bring work home from the office). One wonders why consumers need audio/joystick peripherals and VGA graphics to "work" at home.

Surprisingly, one executive "iron maker" did not "pooh, pooh" the idea of games on his machines. Though one does not usually think of games for "workstations," Scott McNealy (CEO of SUN Microsystems) indicated that he would welcome games running under XWINDOWS on his system. He jokingly observed that a flight simulator could probably go "Mach 48" on a SUN workstation and that the prices were continually coming down. *CGW* would have discounted the reference as grandstanding, however, were it not for some additional information leaked to us during the conference. We were told that **DUX Corporation**, publishers of the *Quintet* package of applications for SUN workstations, is about to establish a **Time-Out Software** line of entertainment software under UNIX. The first two releases are expected to be announced at **Comdex**. They will be *Ishido* and *Solitaire Challenge* (an upgrade from *Solitaire Royale*). The scoring system of the latter will be significantly changed and the "Tour" can be customized by the player.

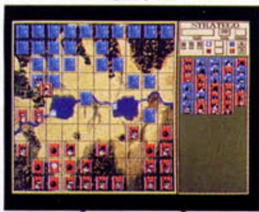
Optical Delusion

Compact Disc-Interactive, the overdue technology from a consortium of electronics companies, is preparing products for "late next year" (yes, you've heard this before) with the help of ABC Sports (a golf simulation), Caesar's Palace (a gambling simulation) and Children's Television Workshop (a preschool educational experience). Yet it looks like both this technology and Commodore's CDTV (Amiga 500 with CD-drive), which missed its Christmas launch date, may be too late as AT&T's new DSP technology threatens to enter the market and drive prices dramatically downward. The question is whether these intermediate technologies have lost their window of opportunity or not.

Nevertheless, whether the future is CD-I, DVI, CDTV, Tandy's multi-media machine being developed in conjunction with Microsoft or DSP, the future looks bright for interactive entertainment with full-motion video, high-quality audio and a non-threatening interface that may, indeed, fulfill the entertainment software industry's hopes for reaching the masses in the millions rather than the technologically literate in the thousands. The future may not be *easy*, but it just might be *big*.

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IBM PC



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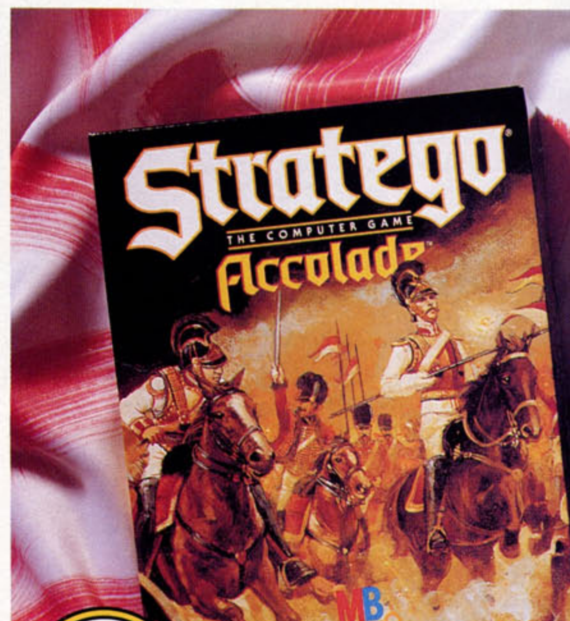
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MAC II

Actual game screens from IBM PC and Mac II
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IBM PC



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MAC II

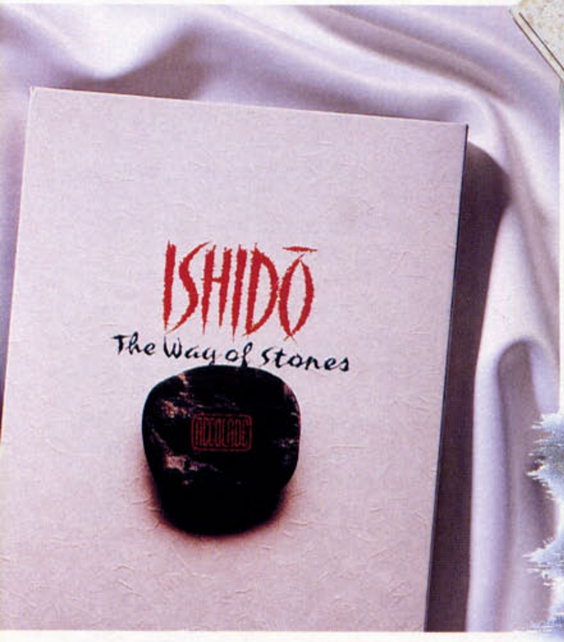


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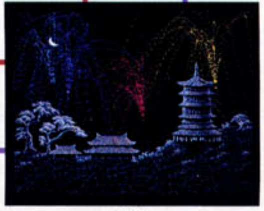
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Blasting VUXs, Etc. Part II

Star Control *Strategy and Tactics*

by Paul Reiche III, Designer



In part one last issue, we examined the Hierarchy Fleet and presented the Tactical Analyzer ("Greg-O-Matic"). Now we present the Alliance Fleet and specialized tactics to improve one's play. Blast off!

The Alliance Fleet

The **Chenjesu Broodhome** is dominant against just about any ship, except the Ur-Quan. The main weapon of the Chenjesu, the photon crystal shard, is versatile in both offense and defense. As long as you have the fire control pressed, the shard will continue on its way. While it's better to hit an enemy with the whole crystal, missing by a tad will still do some damage. Crystals do not harm the Chenjesu, they can be exploded at point blank range to create a kind of Ack-ack, which is useful for cleaning off incoming Ur-Quan fighters or inflicting some damage on ships which have maneuvered behind the Chenjesu. Sometimes it helps to rotate as you detonate the crystals, because this disperses them over a wider area.

Whenever you aren't pressed, launch DOGIs. These autonomous little pests can really annoy your enemy, especially if he is a heavy energy user like the Ur-Quan, Mycon, or VUX. If you are fighting a VUX and he appears right next to you, your only hope is to have a DOGI bump him off-line and steal his fuel to give you time to escape. Even if you are fighting a Spathi-class ship, which is generally unaffected by DOGIs, it is a good idea to get those DOGIs out there if there is any possibility of additional ships appearing in the battle along with the Spathi. If you do keep "them" DOGIs movin', your little buddies will be all over the next ship in a second, the moment she appears.

Like the Ur-Quan, the Chenjesu is an expensive ship, so protect your investment with colonies, and give planets a wide berth whenever engaging a home fleet in battle.

The **Yehat Terminator** is a strong, versatile ship which can deliver either *moderate* damage over a wide area at medium range or *heavy* damage at close range. The distance you will want to maintain between you and your target depends on your enemy's kill zone—the area in which he can hit you effectively. If your range is superior, don't bother closing. Strike from afar.

The only trick to using the Yehat effectively is not to grow over-confident of its protective shield. Often, your barrage of ion-cannon missiles will be just as effective in stopping incoming threats and will, in turn, have the added bonus of occasionally striking the enemy ship as well. Your shield's weakness, particularly versus the Mycon, occurs during that period when it flickers off for an instant. If you are maintaining the shield continuously, this interval of vulnerability is predictable and a skillful opponent will time two weapon strikes. The first is designed to force you to bring up the shield and the second is timed to strike just when your shield flickers off. By all means, remember that your shield has *no effect* against VUX limpets!

The **Mmrnmhrm X-Form** is a workhorse. Given its moderate price and its dual combat configurations, you can hardly ever go wrong buying one of these transforming starships. In general, remaining in the Y-Wing form is safest, since you can damage the enemy from a safe distance, as well as dart off in a hurry should anything dangerous approach you. *Tip:* To make a quick turn, transform momentarily to X-wing configuration, rotate to the desired facing, then switch back to Y-Wing form.

The X-Wing form is best at taking care of the Mycon, because the Podship can regenerate crew faster than the Y-Wing can eliminate them with its missiles. The Ilwrath is also best dealt with in this form, because the Y-Wing's missiles will not track on the enemy vessel when it is cloaked.

Star Control Trivia #2: When I first named the Mmrnmhrm, they actually had a pronounceable name, with vowels and everything. Then, in a sketch for the captain's window illustration, I forgot to give them a mouth. Later, someone saw the sketch and asked me how they talked, so I clamped my lips shut and said something like, "mrrk nsss," thereby instituting a taboo on vowels in anything related to the alien race. Though the Mmrnmhrm ended up looking more like Daleks than Humans, the name stuck.

The **Arilou Skiff** is best played after drinking 4 or 5 cups of coffee. Your success with this ship relies almost entirely on fast reflexes and snappy threat evaluation. If you hyperspace away every time the enemy fires his weapon, you will never get close enough to unleash your



Before the LAPC-1 Music Card

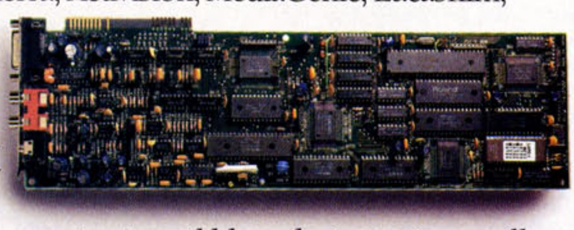


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laser weapon. If you get hit a few times with any weapon, you're vapor. If you get a good strike on the opponent's vessel, don't hang around pinging his ship. Retreat, recharge, and return for another attack run. If you find it difficult to control this ship with a joystick, switch to the keyboard. It's much easier.

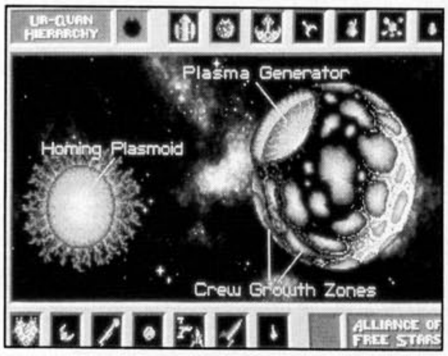
It is always a good idea to keep at least one Arilou around in a Full Game to "pop" Mycons, which should be relatively easy once you've mastered tactic H, the "Homing Weapon Ha-Ha." It is also possible to make an uncontested lightning strike against the enemy, provided he has forgotten about the Arilou's ability to move through enemy Forts, and has left a route to his Starbase (or other key installation) unguarded.

The trick to using the **Syreen Penetrator** is to get close enough to your enemy to use your Syreen Song repeatedly, while simultaneously blasting away with the Syreen's main weapon. The reason for the combination strike is to take care of the last one or two crew members who will not leave the enemy's ship. Remember that, in the Full Game, any crew left floating in space after a battle will be retrieved automatically by the victor. Nevertheless, concentrate on destroying the enemy ship, not on retrieving his crew (unless it is *absolutely* safe). Don't succumb to "crew greed."

Star Control Trivia #3: It was an afternoon late last October in San Francisco when Fred Ford, Greg Johnson and I sat around a monitor trying to name the latest ship design for our new game. The space vessel on the computer screen looked like a copper-plated cross between Tin Tin's "Destination Moon" rocketship and a ribbed condom. Needless to say, we felt compelled to christen this ship carefully, with due consideration for both our customers' sensibilities as well as our artistic integrity. "How about the Syreen Penetrator!" Fred suggested without hesitation. Instantly, the ground did truly rise up and smite us! WHAM-rumble-rumble-WHAM! We were thrown around our office like the bridge crew of the starship Enterprise *under fire by the Klingons. I dimly remember standing in a doorframe, watching the room flex like a cheap cardboard box and shouting, "Maybe that's not such a great name!" and "Gee, do you think San Francisco's still standing?" Of course, once the earth stopped moving, we blithely ignored the dire portent, and the Syreen's ship name, "The Penetrator," was graven in code. Since then, we haven't had a single problem. I mean, everyone has a disk crash two nights before a program is final, right? And hey, accidents happen. Brake pads just don't last forever! My limp is really not that bad, and Greg is almost speaking normally these days.*

The **Earthling Cruiser** is a high-tech expression of that famous ancient Human adage, "Run away from the bad guy, pick up a rock and throw it at his head, then repeat this until the bad guy falls down or goes away." In other words, stay away from the enemy ship, and fire your seeking nukes constantly! Use a Gravity Whip if necessary to keep your distance, but be careful not to collide with the planet.

The only reason ever to get close to an enemy vessel is to make an honorable, point-defense laser "coup de grace", to eliminate the opponent's last crew member.



Shofixti Scouts are great for colonizing and mining in the early stages of a Full Game due to their low cost. They can also be effective against the most powerful enemy vessel, *if* they attack in a squadron of 2 or 3 scouts, and can get close enough to do near-maximum damage with their self-destruct explosion. Three good Shofixti kamikaze attacks will destroy an Ur-Quan Dreadnought, eliminating twice their worth in Starbucks.

Shofixti ships can defeat slow or short-range enemy vessels, if you are very patient and are content to use the Shofixti's light weapon from long range and slowly "plink" your enemy to bits.

Specialized Tactics

The Tactical Analyzer lists the indicated percentages of success for combat between any two opposing ships in the game, as explained in part one of this article. What follows is an explanation of the different suggested tactical maneuvers to best insure that success.

A = Attack!
Engage in relentless pursuit of your enemy. Open fire as soon as you are in range, and maintain until the enemy is destroyed.

B = Spathi Charge
Turn and flee. When your opponent chases you, turn (without thrusting) and fire backwards. Your effective range is increased, while the enemy's is diminished. When the enemy tires of this situation, taunt him until he is willing to recommence the chase.

C = C.U.R.R.R.
(C)lose with enemy, (U)unload weaponry until fuel is depleted, (R)etreat out of enemy's attack range, (R)echarge your fuel supply, and finally (R)epeat this maneuver.

D = Duck Hunt
Sit still and take pot shots at the enemy's ship as he approaches to attack. If he gets behind you, thrust away, then turn, slow to a stop, and continue shooting.

E = Pack o' Hounds
Launch D.O.G.I.s immediately and continuously. In sufficient numbers (a maximum of 4) their interference with your enemy will give you a strong tactical advantage.

F = Fighter Removal
Put the planet between you and an oncoming wave of fighters, forcing them to collide with the planet.

G = Leyland Gravity Whip
To exceed temporarily your ship's normal maximum velocity, pass near the planet while thrusting in a single direction. To decrease speed, turn and thrust in a different direction. Warning! This maneuver can cause a ship to travel faster than its launched weapons and *may* result in a ship being damaged by its own attack! To avoid this effect, turn to face backwards (without thrusting) and launch weapons to the rear. When traveling at high speeds, beware striking the planet. If you get caught in the planet's gravity, don't thrust directly away from the planet. To escape, thrust in an outward spiral around the planet, until you leave its gravity field.

H = Homing Weapon "Ha-ha"
Using your superior mobility, you can lure an enemy's homing weapon back upon him. Execution: as you approach your enemy, he may fire a homing weapon. Instead of fleeing away from the enemy, maneuver around his homing

weapon, toward the enemy vessel. Move to the far side of the enemy ship and maintain this position until the homing weapon strikes the enemy ship, then laugh like this: "Ha-ha!"

I = Bob and Weave
Use your ship's superior maneuverability to keep the enemy from getting a good bearing on your vessel. Change course often. Note: the computer player is less affected by this tactic than a human opponent.

J = Just Out of Range
Your weapons have a longer range than your enemy's. Try to stay in your kill zone, without entering your enemy's by continuously circling his ship at a fixed radius.

K = Kamikaze!
You can do more damage by self-destructing than with your light missile weapon. The closer you get to your enemy, the more damage you will do. On your final attack run, fire your main weapon as you come in, then WHABOOM right in his face. If you are playing against another person, some kind of scream ("Ai-Yeeee!" will do) or other expression is recommended.

L = Launch Fighters!
Launch fighters from medium and long range. For best results, launch a wave, then turn 180 degrees and accelerate to catch the enemy (who is probably fleeing) from behind.

M = Maintain Maximum Range
Keep your ship out of danger by staying as far away from your enemy as possible. Use your long-range weapon to inflict damage on your opponent. If your opponent is faster than you, consider using the Leyland Gravity Whip (tactic G).

N = Blaze!
Your blazer form is very effective in this particular situation, so use it continuously, unless your opponent is moving so fast you can't catch him. Should your opponent have the speed advantage on you, simply stop and save up fuel. Then, hope he slams into the planet.

O = Drop Weapons in Oncoming Enemy's Path
Maneuver in front of your enemy's line of travel and deposit homing weapons.

P = Point-Defense!
Your point defense laser can be of great use in this fight. Remember, it is not effective against powerful missiles, though can be used to destroy fighters or any enemy ship with only 1 or 2 crew remaining.

Q = Crystal Ack-Ack
To avoid being overwhelmed by multiple incoming threats, explode many crystals at point-blank range while turning. Continue until threat is eliminated.

R = Dodge with Retros
Use your unique retro-propulsion system to dodge incoming guided weapons. Jump perpendicular to the path of the missile, activating your special power at the last moment before the missile hits, and only for a short duration.

S = Sing Syreen Song
Your ability to lure enemy crew from his ship is your most effective weapon in this battle. Remember, you don't always need to pick up your enemy's affected crew; his loss is often bad enough.

T = Bubble Cloud
Travel in a tight circle, launching bubbles

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continuously. Stay inside the resultant cloud until the enemy charges in after you, or until the situation changes and you can make effective use of tactic N or O.

U = Use Both Forms

The enemy is susceptible to both Mmrnmhrm ship forms. If the enemy nears, blast him with the twin lasers of the X-Wing, otherwise whittle him down with the long-range missiles of the Y-Wing.

V = Limpet Opportunity

Your opponent is especially open to limpet attack. Even if you lose your VUX, remember that any limpets which hit remain attached to the enemy ship, so your subsequent attackers in this battle will have an advantage.

W = Intercept Weapon

Use your weapon to intercept the enemy's incoming missile. It is easiest to hit an incoming threat in the moment just before it strikes your ship.

X = X-Wing

Your X-Wing form is the most effective in this match-up. Use the Y-Wing form only to escape otherwise unavoidable dangers.

Y = Y-Wing

Remain in your Y-Wing form whenever possible. **CGW**

Earthling Cruiser

Androsynth Guardian

20% GM

N 80%

Chance to defeat enemy vessel

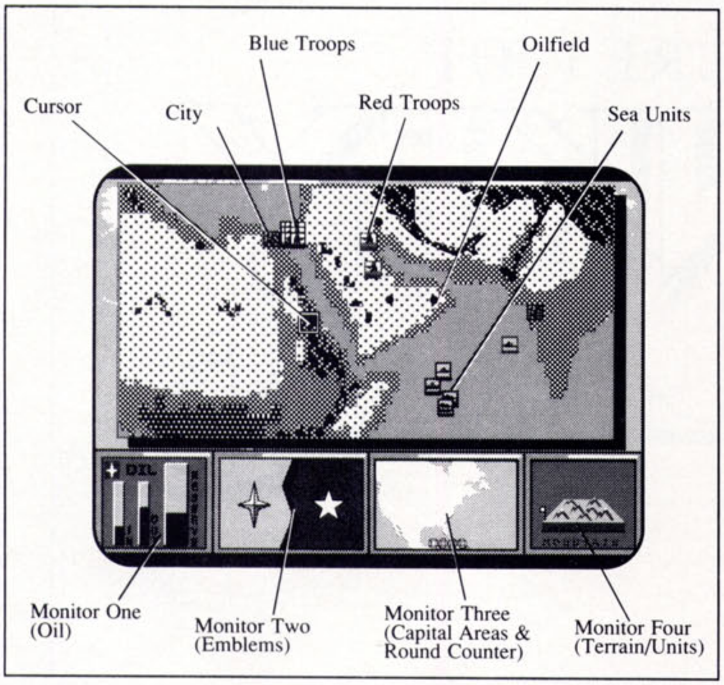
Suggested tactical maneuvers

[Reading key, not printed on the page: each cell gives the column ship's chance and tactics, then after the "/" the row ship's tactics and chance.]

	Chenjesu Broodhome	Yehat Terminator	Mmrnmhrm X-Form	Arilou Skiff	Syreen Penetrator	Earthling Cruiser	Shofixti Scout
Ur-Quan Dreadnought	45% EM Q / A LW 55%	35% CF / LD 65%	30% MY / A 70%	20% CF I / BL 80%	20% FS / DL 80%	10% GM P / A 90%	5% K / DL 95%
Mycon Podship	55% EM W / G 45%	65% AW / GB 35%	50% AX / GM 50%	70% AH / GM 30%	15% SH / D 85%	45% GM W / GW 55%	10% HK / D 90%
Spathi Discriminator	60% MQ / I JO 40%	55% B / I JO 45%	45% U / I JO 55%	60% CI / I JO 40%	50% S / JB 50%	45% GM P / AI 55%	20% IJ / A IO 80%
Androsynth Guardian	60% EM Q / N 40%	60% A / OT 40%	50% U / OT 50%	60% C / OT 40%	80% S / OT 20%	20% GM / N 80%	25% J / OT 75%
VUX Intruder	65% EM Q / GC 35%	50% J / V 50%	70% MY / VG 30%	45% CI / BV 55%	35% J / DV 65%	20% M / A GW 80%	10% BJ / D 90%
Ilwrath Avenger	75% M / AI 25%	75% J / A 25%	70% AX / A 30%	50% CI J / A 50%	50% J / A 50%	20% GM / AW 80%	40% BJ / A 60%
Umgah Drone	80% EM Q / AR 20%	70% J / A 30%	65% MY / AR 35%	65% CI J / A 35%	60% J / A 40%	75% GM / AR 25%	45% J / A 55%

When You're in Command, *Command*!

(Continued from page 14)



machine will almost certainly damage his own morale, in addition to the combat effectiveness of his troops.

Reconnaissance Data

The map is laid out on a huge square grid. Units, while their larger icons occupy nine squares in a square grid when seen on the map, only physically exist on their center square (for all you board wargamers, this gives each unit a kind of "Zone of Control" feel). Terrain includes deserts, jungles, polar wastes and lakes (which all cause attrition); forests and mountains (which, like polar and jungle, are all slow growing); plus the aforementioned objectives, plains (i.e., "clear" terrain), docks and oceans. Finally, there are the player-created nuclear wastelands.

Procurement

As the money rolls in, players are able to go shopping for reinforcements. There are six basic combat units which a player can build, plus five other specialized units and options. Costs vary from 5 to 20 billion dollars, so patience (while waiting for one's economy to generate enough funds to purchase units) is an excruciating must. Time, too, is a crucial element, as newly purchased units take their city or base of construction offline for future purchases for fixed amount of time. Thus, all the money in the world will not raise an instant armada in a single city for the player.

Land combat units come in two flavors: infantry armies and tank armies. Tank armies are considerably faster and serve as superior fighters in the open plains and deserts. Additionally, armor has the ability to find the hole in the enemy's lines and push through toward their rearward objectives. Infantry, on the other hand, is very steady on *both* attack and defense. When left alone

(Continued on page 41)



Scorpion's Tale

Heretofore Untold, Scorpia Reveals

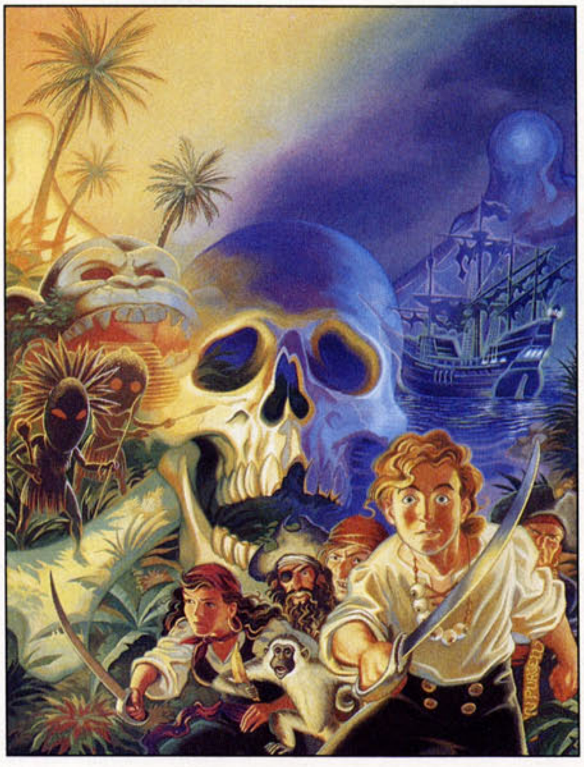
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND™

Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!

So, here we are, in December. Fred's given up on finding that lost month for now. He's busy with all sorts of holiday preparations (don't ask . . .). But, he says he'll start looking again sometime in the spring. Good luck, Fred, you'll need it. Speaking of looking, this is the time of year many people look for a warm spot to spend a couple of weeks away from the winter's cold. If you're one of those, I know this great little spot in the Caribbean . . .

The Secret of Monkey Island, from **Lucasfilm**, is the saga of a pirate wannabe, Guybrush Threepwood. Really. I'll just call him Guy from now on, it's easier all around.

The game is fairly easy, too. In terms of difficulty, it's about a step and a half up from Loom. Much more to do and more puzzles to solve. Also, there's plenty of humor in Monkey Island. Basically, the game is played for laughs and it comes off well. This is a funny adventure.



The graphics are nice, although not quite so good as *Loom*. I now have a sound card (yay!), and found the musical scores (real tunes, not just sound effects) to be quite good (the jazzy jungle beat is my favorite). I have to admit, real music in the right places does add some spice to a game.

This is also smart software. It knows what graphic card and sound card (if any) you have and activates them automatically. No tedious menus to wade through while answering questions about your system. I like that. Of course, if you do want to change anything, there are instructions for doing that manually.

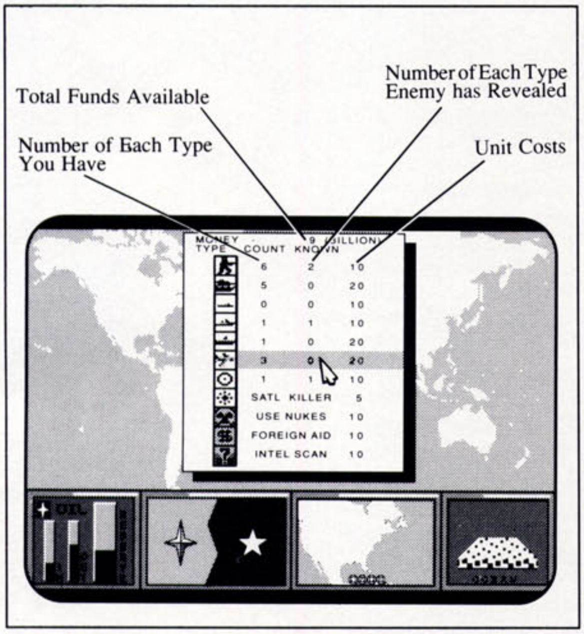
The interface is simple, much like the one in *Loom*. The best part is that there is no silliness about "you're not close enough" to pick up an item. Just click on it, and Guy will walk over and grab it (unless obtaining the item is part of a puzzle). This is one game where you don't have to worry about maneuvering your character precisely around the screen.

(Continued on page 43)

When You're in Command, *Command*!

(Continued from page 39)

for the shortest amount of time, they will entrench, giving them considerably more backbone against all but nuclear attacks. Additionally, they pose a wonderful offensive threat when employed *en masse* (they cost $10 billion, to armor's $20 billion, and so are often more numerous in battles). While they do not infiltrate, as armor does when "overrunning," they can be airdropped a short distance by aircraft units. Popping in on an ungarrisoned enemy objective or attacking his lines from the rear is often *the* decisive tactic performed by the "poor, bloody infantry."



While there is only one type of air unit (and it is expensive at $20 billion), these may be based in quantity at cities/bases/capitols or one may be placed on each aircraft carrier. Air units extend the range of one's spotting capabilities considerably, and can conduct airstrikes, transport infantry and stage to new bases.

Navies consist of the aforementioned aircraft carriers (costing $20 billion apiece), surface fleets (called "cruisers" and costing $10 billion) and the dreaded submarines (also $10 billion). The carrier, even without an air unit, has a long striking range during game play. Both carriers and cruisers can pull up near enemy land units on coastal spaces and "bombard" the daylights out of them. In fact, spending a few turns bombarding a target near the coast prior to and in support of invasions is an important key to victory. Submarines, on the other hand, are nearly invisible. They are virtually undetectable when not moving, and have a good sighting range. When they get near a "transport" (any land unit floating around at sea), they can sink them quicker than you can say "surprise!" As on land, combined arms tactics work best.

Evaluations And Dispositions

There are five scenarios provided with *Command HQ*. The WWI scenario takes the situation in 1918 after the collapse of Russia, with the Kaiser's armies shifting west for the "final offensive," while the American boys cross the Atlantic to turn the tide. This game uses only infantry armies, cruisers and submarines

(Continued on page 121)


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But Wonderland isn't just a bewitching story. It's playing environment breaks new ground for computer adventures. Here's what the editor of Computer Gaming World has to say about it!
"The game is neither strictly a text adventure nor can it be described as a graphic adventure. It is its own genre... The game uses multi-tasking to offer an incredible array of features..."
Besides superb graphics and sound support, Wonderland's unique windowing environment offers pull-down verb and noun menus, graphics you can size up or down and move around the screen, automated mapping, point-and-click object manipulation, a compass for directional movement, and extensive on-screen help.
"Innovative," "ambitious" (The Chicago Tribune), "exquisite and impressive" (CGW), "brilliant and insane" (The Electronic Gamer), are more words used to describe Wonderland. Questbusters calls its windowed universe "the ultimate interface." Stunning graphics, impressive sound board support and a captivating story, all in a sophisticated new windowing system, combine to make Wonderland the richest adventure ever: a game to play, to tell, and to inhabit.
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Scorpion's Tale

(Continued from page 40)

Anyway, our boy wants in on all the glamor, excitement, and plunder that goes with a pirate's life. So he ends up on Melee Island™ looking for action, or at least some directions on how to be a pirate. It isn't long before he finds his way to the SCUMM (not a misspelling, but an amazing similarity to the name of the Lucasfilm parser/interface) Bar. Inside, are a bunch of important-looking pirates, who saddle him with three tasks to perform. If Guy can pull them off, he's a pirate.

Now, it's not the ordinary thing for pirates to bother with a know-nothing, inexperienced kid. Ah, but these are tough times for the buccaneers of Melee Island™. There used to be a nasty pirate by the name of G.P. LeChuck. Then, he died. Now, he's back . . . complete with a ghost ship and a ghost crew. Frankly, he's making life . . . well . . . hell on earth for the living pirates. No wonder they're so desperate that they'd take on someone like Guy.

Anyway, Guy isn't daunted in the least (brave, but maybe a trifle on the naive side). So, off he goes to complete his three quests: stealing the Idol of Many Hands from the Governor, finding the Legendary Lost Planet of Mag—err, that's The Legendary Lost Treasure of Melee Island™, and defeating the Sword Master in single combat. Why, I'll bet he could do all of that in a single night without working up a sweat (especially since the clock is always at 10 PM!).

The first thing Guy needs to do is get his bearings by wandering around town, going everywhere, talking to everyone, and snarfing everything that isn't nailed down. His inventory is bottomless, so there's no worry about overload. If Guy isn't sure about what to say to someone, you can always save the game, even in the middle of a conversation (handy if you want to see what reactions will come from making a smart remark or two).

The governor's mansion looks like a tough nut to crack. The path to it is guarded by a pack of vicious, deadly piranha poodles! Guy doesn't want to get too close to those. Maybe he could come back later, with a tactical nuclear device or something equally effective.

Then again, finding that treasure may not be so easy, either. There's a suspicious-looking man standing on a street corner, with a rare map to the treasure. Of course, he's not handing them (oops) it out for free. Shovels cost money, too.

Well, how about the Sword Master? Gosh, seems like only one person in town knows where she (yes, she) lives, and *he* isn't telling. Not to mention the fact that the Sword Master isn't particularly interested in having a duel, or even a chat, with our boy. What's a pirate wannabe to do?

Maybe some further exploration will help. There's more to Melee Island™ than just the town. Back up the cliff path and past Lookout Point is the rest of the island, with several interesting places to visit. The circus, for instance. Now, here is where Guy can make some quick bucks, if only he had a helmet. Or at least something that would pass for a helmet. Then, he could buy the map and anything else he needs.

Wandering around in the great outdoors, Guy might even find a little something to help with those nasty poodles. However, there doesn't seem to be anyone who can instruct him in swordplay (can't beat the Sword Master without it). Unless that person happens to live beyond the bridge. You know, the bridge guarded by the Troll (so, we know what kind of bridge it is, right?).

All Guy has to do is give the Troll what it wants. He (it?) doesn't want money, which sounds a little fishy to me. Whoever heard of a Troll that wanted something useless? But hey, maybe he's telling the truth (in a game like this, anything could happen!).

Sure enough, once past the bridge Guy happens on Captain Smirk's Swordplay School. Fortunately, Guy has enough money to learn, at least, the bare essentials of handling a sword without cutting himself into sashimi. However, Guy isn't quite ready for the big one yet. He still needs to prove himself in a few fights. Those are easy to come by and Guy will know when it's time to visit the Sword Master. If he can find her.

Remember, only one person knows her location and he ain't telling. If Guy just stands there with his teeth in his mouth, he'll never have his big chance. A word to the wise, and all that.

Oh, did I mention the prisoner? The one being held in the jail? No? Well, now I have (heh). Guy is gonna' have to get him out. There are no pardons available and there is no key. You *might* say this one's the acid test of Guy's ingenuity.

Well, it's been a busy night and about to become even more so. 'Cause as Guy returns from his last task, he's met by the lookout, with some disturbing news. Our friend LeChuck has just kidnapped the Governor (he's had a "pash" for her for years and being dead hasn't changed things) and sailed off with her to his secret hideout on Monkey Island™.

There's only one thing for our boy to do now, and that's play hero. Shouldn't be too hard, just get a ship and a crew and sail off after LeChuck. Funny, though, how the SCUMM bar is suddenly deserted, with only the cook left behind. Wonder where everyone went? Surely there's someone or other around Guy can con . . . umm, persuade into helping him. As a matter of fact, there are three people on the island who are willing (God knows why) to go along. Now, it's just a matter of obtaining a ship, and we all know there's only one place for that: Stan's Previously-Owned Vessels.

Dealing with Stan is, well, a pain in the nether regions. He's the epitome of all fast-talking salesmen, so you know what that means. "I'm not happy unless you're happy, and I know you're gonna leave here happy today". (gak) Alas, there's no way around it. Much though Guy would rather strangle this twit with his own words, he'll have to spend time (maybe a long time, sigh) haggling over the price of the ship. Well, no one ever said being a pirate was all bottles of rum and pieces of eight. Sometimes, you just have to do some dirty work, too.

Speaking of work, poor Guy has more cut out for him. His choice of crew (if he had a choice) may not have been the best. Once on board, the trio decide the Governor can take care of herself; they'd rather cruise the Caribbean and work on

(Continued on page 116)

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Fire Brigade	34
Hawk	call
Harpoon	call
Life and Death	call
Loom	41
Lost Patrol	call
Magic Fly	call
Night Breed	call
Night Hunter	call
Overrun	call
Pool of Radiance	35
Powermonger	call
Sands of Fire	call
Second Front	41
The Immortals	call
Their Finest Hour	41
Unreal	call
Untouchables	call

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Dragon Lord	call
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Empire (A2)	call
The Immortal (GS)	call

CCC INFORMATION CENTER

We have never seen such a large and diversified Pre-Christmas Line-up. You will notice most titles are coupled with a CALL. We did not know the prices at the time of this AD but wanted to show all the titles due to be out before CHRISTMAS!! Feel free to call and check availability, pricing and, of course, we still have all our regular titles. FREE Newsletter available for ALL formats.

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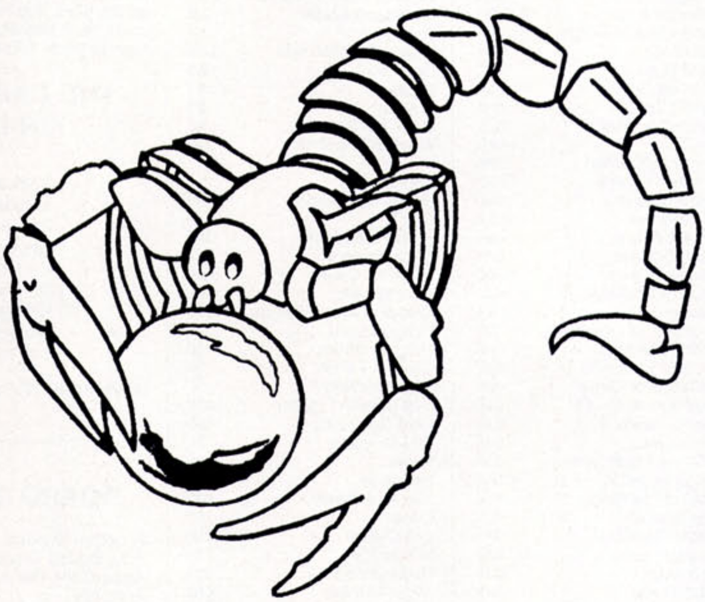
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Circle Reader Service #23

Scorpion's View

Scorpia Experiences An Altered Destiny





It's time again to look into the crystal ball. I see . . . yes, I see that, at last, the new games are starting to arrive. The Christmas market is *finally* beginning to heat up. Good thing, too; even *my* crystal ball can't reveal details of a game until it actually exists.

Altered Destiny is one of those adventures that leaves me with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, it is great to see Mike Berlyn (*Oo-Topos*, *Cyborg*, *Suspended*, and *Infidel*) back in action again. However, on the other hand, the game suffers from a few problems that make it less than a joy to play.

Mechanical Drawing (Hardware and Interface)

The first difficulty I encountered was getting the game to run at all. After installation, a separate setup program comes up with menus for choosing graphics and sound. Having a super VGA card, I naturally chose the extended graphics. The game refused to boot. All I saw was a blank screen, and no activity on the hard drive.

For the time being, I re-ran the setup for regular EGA/VGA, but eventually I got hold of Mike and discussed the problem with him. *Altered Destiny* needs a lot of free memory. A lot. Even with my buffers knocked down to 15, I couldn't run the extended graphics. The only way I found to do it was to re-boot DOS (v3.3) without the high-memory managers (my 386 has 2 meg RAM). Then, the game ran and I had no further problems in this area. My Sound Blaster card, by the way, worked perfectly from the start using the Adlib choice from the menu.

However, before you hurry to re-do your CONFIG.SYS, make a copy of it. You may find that some of your other programs won't run without high-memory management. My Deluxe Paint II Enhanced, for instance, wouldn't operate in any of the high-resolution modes (such as 640 x 480 with 256 colors) until I re-booted my system with my original config file that installed the extended memory programs.

The real question is whether or not all this fuss is necessary. The extended VGA graphics (which are actually MCGA) have a little better resolution than the regular type, but that's about all. You can run Altered Destiny under standard mode and really not miss anything spectacular. In fact, while the graphics (either mode) are okay, in my opinion they don't really do justice to the many imaginative conceptions in the game.

(Continued on page 66)

Designers' Notes

Inside Origin's Bad Blood . . .

by Greg Malone & Jeff George

Jeff George penned the story for Bad Blood and believes strongly in its social significance. This article is designed to both clarify the "message" of the game and provide hints for those who have not yet completed the adventure.



Centuries ago, mankind destroyed his green and bounteous world in a fiery holocaust, now remembered as the Great Fires. Yet, neither mankind nor his world was utterly consumed in the disaster—both survive, but in a very different form. Today, the world is covered by barren plains, shifting sands and rocky peaks. Bizarre monsters, hideously mutated descendants of pre-holocaust animals, stalk the countryside in search of prey. The lakes and seas are slimy and contaminated, though they are still home to their own dangerous predators. All that remains of the ancient cities are crumbling ruins, haunted by the desperate and insane.

The descendents of those who destroyed the world are now divided into two groups—the pure humans, in towns built from the ruined cities, and the mutants (or "mutes"), in their villages on the open plains. For generations, the two groups have warred with one another over the limited resources of this blasted world.

Humans see in their mutant cousins—and in their own mutant children—the end of their race, yet they need the labor of mutant slaves to build and maintain their towns. Mutants, on the other hand, resent their enslavement to the "purebloods", and they long for the technology which the purebloods are rediscovering behind their town walls. In an attempt to quell the growing mutant discontent, Lord Dominix, ruler of the pureblood town of Yvrium, is planning an assault which may wipe out the free mutants in the villages on the plains. One such village, Mardok, will send a single adventurer in search of a way to stop the war and overcome centuries of *Bad Blood* . . . that adventurer is, of course, the player's character.



Travel Tips

The player's interaction with the many characters encountered in the world of *Bad Blood* is both complex and varied, depending in large part on what type of character the player chooses to become at the beginning of play: a human male named Dekker (born to mutant parents), Jakka (a quick and aggressive female hiding a powerful mutant secret), or Varigg (an immensely powerful, seven-foot tall, green-skinned mutant). The multifaceted citizens populating the world of *Bad Blood* interact with you in different ways, depending on which character you represent. Those who choose to be a mutant character will have to pose as a slave in order to move through the city and will find most of the misguided townsfolk to be contemptuous toward the character, at best. Of course, if a human character or a human-appearing mutant has been chosen, the player will have to guard against showing the slightest hint of pro-mutant sentiment in a conversation or action, since such behavior results in a swift response from the military guards who serve the bigoted interests of Lord Dominix.

The Clue Path

Before the protagonist ventures from his/her home village, the Himukk (the tribal leader) urges the adventurer to seek the Oracle. In conversations with fellow villagers, one learns that the Shaman of Nivvik (another mutant village) visits the Oracle from time to time. If the adventurer is able to survive the dangers of the wilderness, he/she will find the village of Nivvik and discover that the Shaman has been captured by Kejek slavers. The Kejek are, naturally, an evil tribe of mutants who make their living by capturing free mutants for sale to human slave traders. Locating the Kejek camp, it becomes the player character's task to rescue the Shaman. In turn, the Shaman reveals the path to the Oracle's remote hut—across the Nivvik lake and far back into the canyon lands.

Enroute to the home of the Oracle, one encounters the terrible Urse, a 12-foot tall, sharp-fanged bear-like creature best described as "walking death." A character who is courageous enough to overcome the attack of the Urse will be rewarded by the acquisition of an "oozee," a rapid-fire submachine gun.

DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

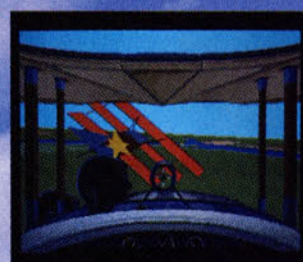
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VGA color air combat sequence



Strategy mode split-screen with 3D Hexboard

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- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal *and* external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....





VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft



VGA 256 color mine field under North Atlantic

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Crossing the polluted lake with the aid of a rubber raft, which must be acquired along the way, one at last finds the Oracle cloistered away. The Oracle sends the character on a quest after an ancient artifact, worshipped by a cult of fanatics in Zero Town, a heavily irradiated, bombed-out city. When the cultists welcome the protagonist into their midst, it is only to discover that their "idol" is an old computer known as "the Apple of the Ancients." In order to succeed, one is obliged to take this 8-bit "god" back to the Oracle. Naturally, this cannot

(Conrinued on page 126)

Future Fascination

"Filtered through a toxic haze of iridium, cesium and depleted ozone molecules, the red sun relentlessly beats down on the barren planet below. What was once a flourishing green and blue world has been replaced by a searing wasteland populated by a society of sentient beings through whose veins flow another form of toxic waste . . . racial hatred and bigotry."

—excerpt from an early draft of the *Bad Blood* story line not in the final version

Not a pretty picture? Definitely not. Popular film releases like *Total Recall*, *Road Warrior*, *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, and *Hardware* all paint similar grim destinies for a world which didn't learn its lessons soon enough to avert global disaster. Television programs such as *Alien Nation*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Beauty and the Beast* frequently deal with the unpleasant aspects of racial division and the pervasive misunderstanding between different ethnic groups. So why is it that many of the world's filmgoers, readers of science fiction and television viewers seem transfixed by such depictions of an inhospitable dark future? The fascination with "doom and gloom" scenarios has historically been an obsession of organized societies. This phenomenon hearkens back several millenia to the psycho-religious visions passed on by the societies' respective prophets who universally depicted mankind's eventual punishment for its blind pursuit of folly.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision . . . The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine." —Joel 3:14-15

Bad Blood is one of a handful of recently published software "worlds" elaborately designed to give its users an interactive taste of this desperate, though adventure-filled, future. Last year's successful computer game *Wasteland* established the acceptability of such a powerful topic in a computer software medium. Today, *Bad Blood* takes that vision another step, as it foretells a merciless system of social apartheid set against the backdrop of a chaotic war-ravaged world we all hope will permanently remain in the realm of fantasy and science fiction.

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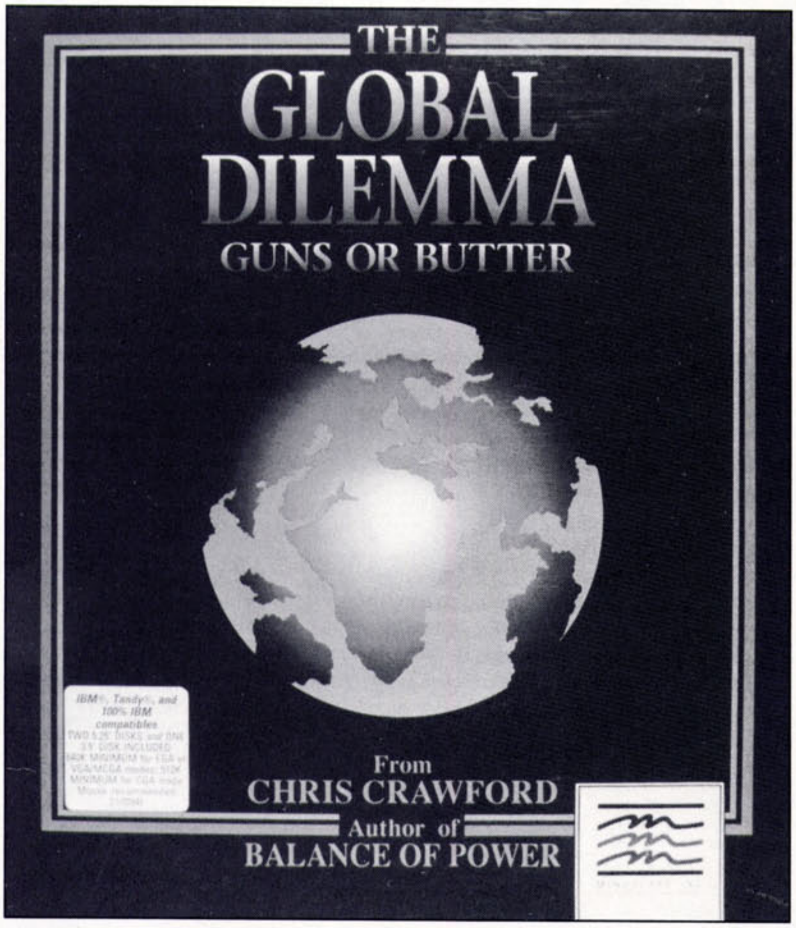
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Circle Reader Service #76



Economic

Mindscape's The Global

by Chuck Moss

Singlehandedly running an industrial economy is no bed of roses, as the folks in Eastern Europe have found out. Still, programmer/designer Chris Crawford (*Balance of Power* and *Balance of the Planet*) enjoys presenting tough challenges. So his latest computer game, *The Global Dilemma: Guns or Butter* (*G/B*), permits a player to do precisely that. Combining a detailed economic model, rudimentary aspects of war and diplomacy, and a *Risk*-like feel, *G/B* aspires to simulate the dilemmas of "Ceaucescue, Castro, Thatcher" (as the package blurb expounds to the casual shopper's eye).

Unfortunately, the game—while very good in many respects—falls a bit short of that high ambition.

First, the good news. *G/B* is an elegant and fascinating computer game. It is easy to master, with generally superb graphics, a simple interface, three levels of difficulty and a save-game feature. Crawford has become famous for crafting computer simulations with social and political significance, and *G/B* is no exception. *G/B* is intended to force the player into devising economic strategy and making difficult choices.

In this game, a player must manage the economy of a hypothetical nation, surrounded by a continent of other similar nations. The geographical set-up is randomly generated, each nation having certain resources within its boundaries. The other nations are led by artificial intelligences, each with its own personality and facial expressions.

The Dilemma (Game Play)

The object of the game is to conquer the continent, vanquishing the opposition. To do this, the player must build up an economy capable of supporting a victorious military machine. To do *this*, the player must manage the flow of resources and production, moving up to more complex technologies whenever possible.

The player turn consists of three phases. First is the "diplomatic" phase, where the players—human and computer—join into "unions," which merge their productive capacities. Central to Crawford's model are economies of scale. The bigger the economy, the more food or weapons one can build per input of production. Unions are a quick, cheap way to boost strength and also function as military alliances.

Player unions are an important part of Crawford's scheme. As an alternative to international trade, they exist for one turn. During that turn, however, the player—human or otherwise—who *proposed* the union gets control of *all* the players' economies combined. So those who join a union skip the next step: economic planning.

The second step (economic planning) is the heart of the game and Crawford's model makes resource allocation simple. A series of resource inputs (iron ore, coal, lumber) are allocated, via a flow chart, to be channeled through the production process and thus make more complex inputs (pig iron, steel). Then, these inputs can be channeled into the production of *final* products (swords, farm tools). These, in turn, show up as food production and military strength. The amount of production is varied by the amount of labor allocated.

Therefore, if the player wants to make swords, he must allocate enough labor to mine the ore, cut the trees, make the charcoal, mix it all into pig iron, and *then* forge the weapons. At the same time, he must build enough farm tools to feed the people and, hopefully, produce a surplus that allows the population, and hence the economy, to grow. A shortage of one material (e.g. iron ore) rebounds throughout the whole economy, causing shortages of everything else. There is no free or black market.

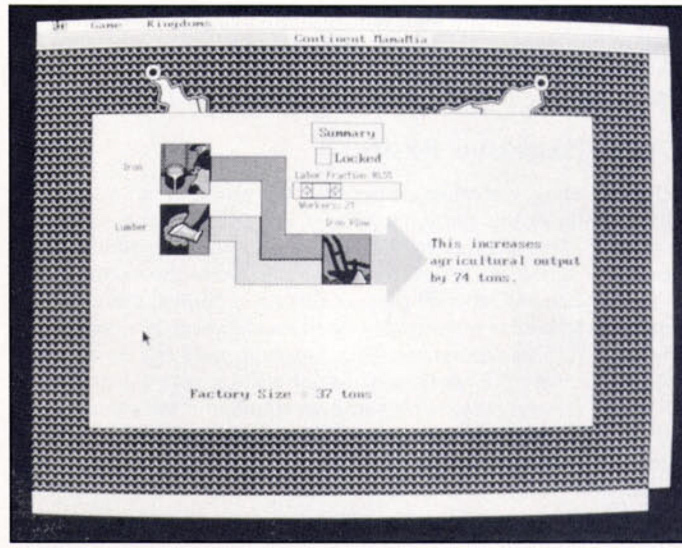
Both the flow chart and a Summary Page display the surplus or shortage of each item. Players juggle labor to reduce both surplus and shortages, until an efficient production mix smoothly fills both the needs of people and military security.

Of course, swords and farm tools are the bottom of the technological ladder. Players can move upward through increasingly advanced and effective technologies, through muskets and iron plows, up to cannon and irrigation or tractors and tanks. But woe to him who shifts technology prematurely!

The next step up in technology is twice as effective as the pre-

Imperative

Dilemma: Guns or Butter



vious, but one must keep in mind the fact that early production runs are smaller! 200 swords (firepower 200) can beat 50 muskets (firepower 100), and like an Isaac Asimov character, you *can* be defeated by the inferior science of your enemies.

TITLE:	The Global Dilemma: Guns Or Butter
SYSTEMS:	IBM, MacIntosh
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Chris Crawford
PUBLISHER:	Mindscape Inc. c/o The Software Toolworks

The third step is military movement. All the weapons produced are shown on the map and players shift forces around in order to attack and defend. There is a strong pro-defense bias to the game—attacking down a road takes a minimum of 20 "armies" to succeed, and attacking overland *quarters* one's force through attrition, then subtracts ten more points. However, movement between friendly provinces carries no penalty. Successful conquest is rewarded with shifting borders and increased population and resources.

At least theoretically, then, *G/B* is a game of shifting alliances, macro-economic management and military conquest. How does it work in practice?

Butter (Positive Strokes)

Let's start out with a big hurrah for the economic model. It may lack certain subtleties connected with real-life economies like declining marginal utilities, demand curves of any sort, and inevitable waste and "friction" (let alone infrastructure investments like education, sanitation and housing). It treats human beings as simple production units to be shifted from agriculture to steelmaking at the click of a mouse. No matter. Even *SimCity* fails to present a total picture.

The simplicity, elegance and ease of *G/B*'s economic interface make allocating resources and charting production processes quick and easy. The economic model itself functions smoothly and understandably. The production summary allows the player quick access to data, identifying bottlenecks swiftly. This part of

Principles of Macroeconomics (Specific Game Hints)

G/B has some very basic formulae that govern strategy. Alas, the manual suffers from terminal cuteness, wasting 40% of its space in a too-too San Francisco chat 'tween Devil and Lady God that buries crucial data. This reviewer recommends that players go through these convoluted dialogues with a yellow *Hi-Liter*, picking out the equations and studying them in the context of the game.

First, one must either generate an agricultural surplus on the very first turn or join a union. Since there is no way to know one's starting situation in advance, it is a good idea for players to stay out of a union on the first turn and scrutinize the initial economic position. If one is in bad shape, rebooting becomes the better part of valor.

Once in a union, one should play the field *ruthlessly*. The primary objective must be to conquer as much territory as possible in order to build a resource base sufficient to support a large military machine during those inevitable times when the artificial personalities gang up on the human player. It is useful to pay close attention to who is in what union, because the unions limit who *can* and *cannot* be attacked.

Often, the union dynamics will leave human players unable to expand. It happens. In those cases, one should simply wait it out and hope for the best.

Second, players should remember that defense is king. A minimum of 20 armies is needed to conquer along a road, 50 overland. One should garrison their borders with maximum economy of force, shifting armies around to meet possible thrusts. Unions generally (but not always) attack *only* their declared enemy, leaving you safe and able to concentrate on food production and resulting economic growth.

Third, players must not shift technologies prematurely! The crossover point is 340 tons, where it's more productive to make a higher-tech weapon or farm tool. Since the production curve will usually lag weapons behind agriculture, one should *never* shift until weapons production reaches 300 tons. Otherwise, one is likely to be pounced upon and overwhelmed.

Also, it is advisable to shift both military and agricultural technology together. No one has a sufficient labor pool to sustain two-tier technology.

Fourth, mountains should be one's primary objectives in terms of military targets. They have the most resources to offer.

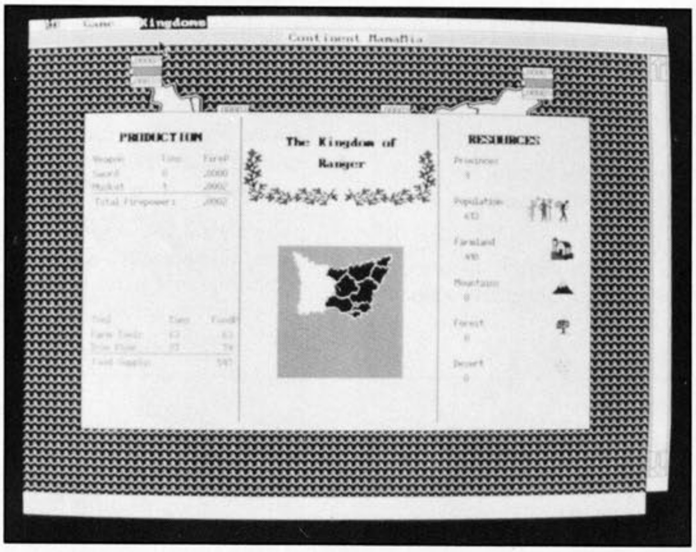
In short, one should use unions intelligently so that, with luck and adroit switching, one can build a sufficient resource base for development. Borders must always be secured. Expansion is mandatory. And, above all, one must beware the character "Tigar." He's the meanest, as well as the ugliest.

the game program is a leap ahead of anything this reviewer has seen on the market, except for *Balance of the Planet*. Unlike *Balance of the Planet*, *G/B*'s model actually allows the player to achieve positive results quickly. This game is loads more fun.

Guns (Negative Shots)

Unfortunately, the other elements of the game aren't quite as breathtaking as the economic model, and hold down the satisfaction level. Many players will be concerned about the continent generator. Since, the player is *always* placed in the northern region, invariably between players Gillig and Kublai, there does not seem to be the randomality one would expect in a game that is designed to be replayable. This, however, may not be very significant because the continents do not always have the same allocations of resources in the same locations and the opponents (whether named the same or not) do not always have the same strength, disposition toward the player or strategies from game to game.

The second disappointment concerns the computer players. Although Crawford devotes much effort and disk space to these, they do not seem like very clever opponents. The AIs are really too hawkish to negotiate with and make irrational alliance partners. Worse, they almost never advance technologically, so joining their unions and putting your economy in their hands is a dead-end guarantee of stagnation. Worse still, if one joins a union for even one turn to gain a brief economic advantage, all of the player's production levels will have been reset to the lower technologies of the union when one's economy returns to player control. *[Ed: Crawford points out that the unions do not advance technologically as much as human players because the unions are so "hawkish" that they are not concerned with technological advancement.]*



Third, the iconography for the economic phase is very attractive, but many will feel that the computer players' faces look like an 8th Grader's illustration for the Middle School Yearbook. This *is* something of a drawback, now, but one should also be aware that this is the first generation of a "face technology" which Crawford is developing, using object-oriented programming rather than bit-mapped graphics. It may lose something in the translation in *this* game, but it is also something of a trade-off. The object-oriented "face technology" allows the computer characters to have a library of about 100 different facial expressions. To bit-map the same number of expressions would have required over 300K of bit-mapping that would have taken away from other portions of the game. Further, Crawford's tendency to simply "colorize" Macintosh graphics with fill routines (previously harangued in *Balance of the Planet*, *CGW* #72, p. 19) is also present in *G/B*.

Another quibble lies in the dynamics of technology shifts—going from swords to tanks. This is the really entertaining portion of *G/B*: working the bugs out of the system, finding bottlenecks in wire and pipe production, fine-tuning that military-industrial complex like Albert Speer . . . But the way the game shakes out, a player is almost never able to afford those shifts until he has a preponderance of military strength and the tech shifts are moot. The enemies continue making swords and often surrender while the player is still at rifle levels. One should never expect to have two industrial machines battling with tanks! *[Ed: Tanks are a designed ceiling in the game. They are the high point of technology and Crawford believes that having a tank vs. tank confrontation would be both a failure in play (because anyone who gets to tank technology should have won conclusively as a reward for developing the technology that high) and in game design (because the ceiling would be too low and the challenge would be missing).]*

Perhaps *G/B*'s greatest negative facet is an apparent failure of the game to deliver on its own stated objectives. *G/B* is billed as an economic simulator where players can work out their own development strategies. In the manual, it is specified that a player, devoting all his resources to food production at the lowest level of technology, can achieve a 30% surplus. This makes sense, as allocating that surplus makes for the economic choices.

Unfortunately, the game almost never gives the player a starting surplus at all. In fact, the usual starting situation leaves one with severe shortages in all raw materials and in total food production! This reviewer found no way to jump-start an economy or make any choices about development. The perception is that one *must* join a union and hope for the best. This is *definitely* true if a player continually makes choices on behalf of the military-industrial complex. It is *sometimes* true if a continent poor in resources is generated. From this reviewer's perspective, it is *too often* true.

Leading Indicators (Conclusions)

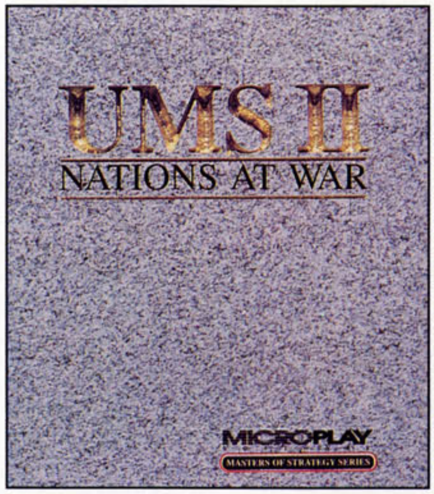
This doesn't, of course, mean *The Global Dilemma: Guns Or Butter* is worthless. Far from it. This reviewer thought he hated it the first time he played. In fact, he thought he hated it the second time, and the third, etc. However, by the tenth time he played it, he asked the inevitable question: "If I hate this game so much, why do I keep booting it up?" Like other Crawford games, *G/B* sneaks up on you.

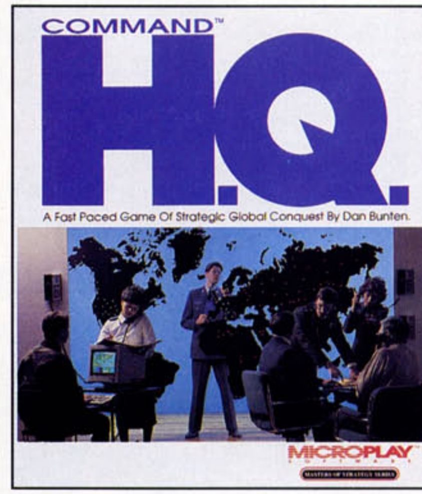
It's a valuable model for demonstrating the *connectedness* of things in an economy. It teaches lessons of production processes. It is, frankly, a socialist model, but wouldn't the ultimate conservative game be a free-market simulator where the player sits back and does nothing? *G/B* would be *invaluable* as a classroom exercise. Indeed, to the player who takes the time to master the quirky system and accept it on its own terms, *The Global Dilemma: Guns Or Butter* is challenging, rewarding and enjoyable in repeated play.

Nevertheless, to be totally fair, it is an uneven product, one whose military and diplomatic components do not measure up to its groundbreaking economic model. In a classroom, *G/B* would probably get an A+ for effort, but an overall B+ in result. **CGW**

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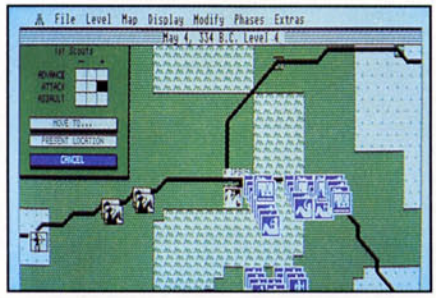
But when the conflict starts, an innovative animation window lets you see all the action as if you were right there on the front lines.

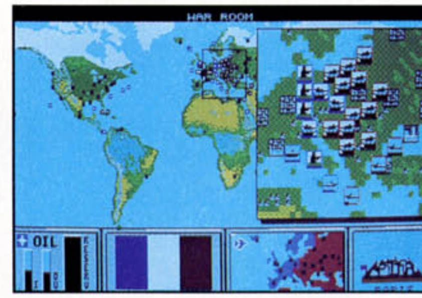
With its modem and direct connect capability, Command HQ lets you and a buddy send taunting messages back and forth as you maneuver to drive each other into submission. If your friend's not around, no problem... the shrewd computer opponent will give you all the action you can handle.

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Battle of Britain Tour Results

Biggin Hill. Middle Wallop. Thorpe Abbotts. Duxford. North Weald. Seething. The English have such great place names. They are fun to read and even more fun to pronounce. These names have character. These names have "history". But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Earlier this year, **Lucasfilm Games** and *Computer Gaming World* co-sponsored a nationwide *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* Tournament. Hundreds of entries from all over the U.S. and Canada were received.

In the first round, contestants were asked to submit a disk containing a file for a pilot of their creation who had amassed a minimum of 1000 points in the game. From these disks 100 were randomly chosen to compete in the semi-finals.

The 100 semi-finalists were required to submit: 1) a winning campaign commanding the RAF and 2) a custom mission flying any of the Luftwaffe aircraft. A "winning campaign" could be accomplished in one of two ways: 1) survive until September 16, 1940 (thus postponing Hitler's Operation Sea Lion); or 2) defeat the Luftwaffe to the point where the German pilot or aircraft resources fall below the minimum level and they can no longer continue their air assault. The contestants with the five highest scores went to the finals.

The five finalists were: Roger Besaw (Columbia, MD; who played his final round at Software Advantage, Rockville, MD); Mike Griffin (Lubbock, TX; played final round at Walden Software); Steve Piotrowski (Willowdale, ONT, Canada; played at Beamscope); Steve Smith (Bloomfield, NJ; played at Walden Software, Paramus, NJ); and Vaclav Ujuk (Hermosa Beach, CA; played at Super Computer Center, Torrance, CA).

Each finalist flew the five custom missions designed by the finalists (including their own), as well as a mission created by *Their Finest Hour* designer Larry Holland.

The competition was fierce and tense. Roger Besaw prevailed with 1335 points (but only by the skin of his teeth). Mike Griffin came in a *close* second with 1300 points. The ironic thing is that Mike "choked" on his own mission, a mission which he said he could "fly in his sleep". Unfortunately, he wasn't allowed to sleep during the finals! Just kidding, Mike. War is hell!

Here are the six missions with Tournament winner Besaw's comments in quotes.

In JIM2 you fly a Bf109 with two ace wingmen with orders to fly CAP (free-ranging). A second German crew was also in Bf109s flying free-ranging CAP. A third German flight group was made up of 3 JU88s with pretty decent crews. Their orders were to perform a level bombing attack on Dover CHL radar station. Your forces were opposed by three flights of British fighters. Since the custom mission design utility allows you to assign "waves" to each flight (i.e. when all the planes in a flight are shot down the computer generates another "wave"

of the same flight) there could be up to 37 British planes opposing you in this mission. "This mission wasn't that difficult. You didn't get harassed that bad. I picked off fighters on the way home."

In SWEEP1 you fly a Bf109 with a novice wingman. Your orders are to fly free-ranging CAP. You are opposed by three flights of Spitfire Mk2s. A maximum of 13 enemy fighters could appear via activating the "waves". "This mission was a little tough. You have to fly with a novice wingman, which puts you in greater peril. You have to watch your fuel and ammo on this one. You are a long way from your base."

In TOUGH2 your task is to dive bomb Ventnor CHL radar station. You have a lone Ju-87 Stuka bomber and are opposed by two flights (two planes and two waves each) of Hurricane Mk1s. "The Ju-87 is slow and vulnerable. As soon as I detected the fighters I climbed to gain superior altitude. You *had* to engage the enemy fighters, you could not succeed in this mission unless you took out the Hurricanes. This became a battle of tactics. You attempt to turn inside the computer-controlled Hurricanes using good deflection shooting. You have to pick your shots carefully. I enjoyed this mission."

In LORDHAHA (Roger's mission) you fly a lone Bf110 Messerschmitt. Your rear gunner is a novice. Your task is to strafe and bomb Stanmore Fighter Command HQ. You are opposed by four flights of Hurricanes and Spitfires. Two of the flights start on the ground (one at Hornchurch and one at Northolt). The other two flights patrol areas that you fly through on your way home. "You had to fight your way in and fight your way out in this mission. To accomplish your mission meant flying low over the target. The initial British fighters would be low (having started on the ground). The later flights were at altitude patrolling your likely flight path home."

WINNER (a pretentious mission name if ever there was one) was the odd mission. "It should have been thrown out," said Besaw. You fly an HE-111 bomber with orders to bomb three targets (Dover CHL, Hawkinge, and Lympne). Two flights of enemy fighters were simply ordered to land (making them sitting ducks for the pilot who stumbled upon them, or knew where to go look for them). One flight of Spitfire Mk2s flew CAP (ignore attack).

SUICIDE was Larry Holland's mission. True to its name, the mission starts with two flights of Spitfire Mk2s right on top



of you. Thanks a lot, Larry. We wonder if he would have been this cruel if *he* had to compete against the mission? You fly a Bf110 with a strafing and bombing mission (Dover CHL radar) but 6 Spitfire Mk2s (top aces all) are on you from the start. "I knew this was Larry's mission right from the start."

* * * * *

Roger and his guest (his father) were treated to an 11-day Aviation Buffs' Tour of England as the tournament champion. He was accompanied by *CGW* Editor-in-Chief Russell Sipe and Mrs. Sipe.

The tour had a dual emphasis. On the one hand we were there to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain (1940). On the other hand, we visited many airfields and sites associated with the American 8th Air Force, where the emphasis was on events in 1943-1944. The tour encompassed airfields, museums, airshows, and non-aviation sightseeing (such as visits to Blenheim Palace, Wilton House, and Winston Churchill's burial site).

Our tour guide, Bob Reynolds, was a Lancaster bomber pilot during the war

and lived in the London area during the Blitz. His stories and observations made the tour come alive for us. Additionally, the people that lived in the areas we traveled often had fascinating wartime stories to tell as well.

Many Americans have their stories of what life was like on the "Home Front", and those stories are often fascinating. But when you listen to the English tell their stories about the war you realize that their "home front" was *The* Front.

For example, when we were in London on September 15 for the 50th Anniversary Celebration, we had a fantastic vantage point standing on the Waterloo Bridge to watch the 50th Anniversary Battle of Britain fireworks show (complete with air raid sirens and search lights). From our vantage point the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral stood out against the night sky across the Thames with the fireworks mimicking the Battle bursting seemingly all around the church. But

(Continued on page 114)



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The Aces High museum at RAF North Weald houses Dolly, *the camera plane for the movie* Memphis Belle



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- Space Quest 1 or 2 ... 30.95
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- Weird Dreams ... 24.95
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- Wild Streets ... 27.95
- Wind Walker ... 25.95
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- Wolf Pak ... 34.95
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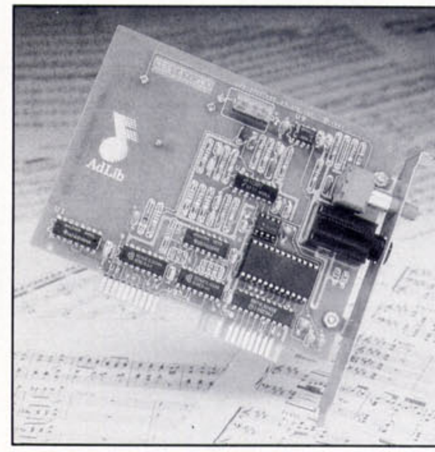
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Circle Reader Service #27

Re-Sounding Personal Computers

A Sound Board Buying Guide

by Rich Heimlich



AdLib Sound Card



Roland MT-32

Rich Heimlich is President of TSCS, Inc., a quality-assurance testing firm that specializes in entertainment software.

Computer gaming on the IBM continues to enter new realms of discovery and fascination. With the advent of VGA graphics and the seemingly endless capabilities of CD-ROM, computer gaming has taken a giant step forward. Improved sound via new sound cards has led the way in these long-awaited changes. The problem is fast becoming not *why* to enhance the sound ability of one's PC, but which card to buy in order to do so. Here are some observations that may help.

The Wondrous Days Of Yesteryear

In the early days of PC sound cards (circa 1988), the world openly accepted the only card available at an economical price: the **AdLib** card, along with its Personal Computer Music System software. The AdLib promised no more annoying beeps and boops emanating from computer games and did this so well that, even today, it is still considered the standard in affordable sound cards.

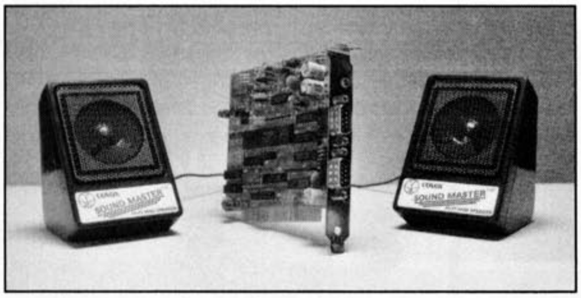
Sierra Online, makers of the popular *King's Quest* series, helped lead the way in bringing incredible sound to the IBM computer. They not only supported the AdLib card but also the **Roland MT-32** and **IBM Music Feature Card**. Other developers caught on and it has become the standard to find games enhanced by quality sound board support.

Scripting An AdLib

The AdLib card has remained virtually the same since it came out in August, 1987. It is based on a technology called *FM synthesis*, provided by an integrated circuit chip from **Yamaha** which uses FM sound. Basically, this chip provides 11 "voices" or channels of sound, meaning that the card can play 11 instruments at one time as compared to only the single instrument on a standard PC speaker. Of the technologies represented in the sound cards available today, FM synthesis is the least expensive method of generating quality sound. AdLib cards also come with a quarter-inch stereo speaker jack (soon to be changed to an eighth-inch mini jack) for headphones or speakers, and a dial so that you can adjust the volume. AdLib has also made it possible for the card to play back recorded sounds called "digitized samples" in an acceptable 6-bit format. An AdLib card can be purchased in stores for about $100 or less and includes AdLib's Juke Box program. For those interested in music composition, one can also get the Personal Computer Music System which consists of the AdLib board, Visual Composer (a composition program), Composition Projects, and Juke Box. The PCMS retails for $219.

Roland (MT-32) Blows His Horn

As the market for sound enhancement products grew, other manufacturers created their own boards. One of the earliest AdLib competitors was the **Roland MT-32**. The MT-32 is a familiar product in the professional music industry. Musicians typically write many songs using an MT-32 and software like *Sequencer+* from **Voyetra**. Roland also has sold far more of these cards than any of its competitors. However, most of these cards are used by musicians as opposed to gamers. Roland realized that this card could be adapted to the gaming environment and, with a little help from **Sierra**,



Covox Sound Master

entered the market when *King's Quest IV* came out. The MT-32 is based on MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), a standard already established in the music industry. It uses a technology known as Linear Arithmetic Synthesis which enables the MT-32 to generate 32 voices of sound. Not only does the MT-32 have 21 more voices than an AdLib card, but it also benefits from the superior LAS technology. This allows for the most realistic sound available in computer gaming today. The MT-32 is like having a complete orchestra in your computer. It is so impressive that when this reviewer recently played *Space Quest III* using an MT-32, his jaw almost dropped to the floor. The experience is like living a dream. Unfortunately, all this technology does not come cheap. The MT-32 (with an exterior box), and another Roland sound card, the LAPC-1 (which is strictly an internal card) cost about the same at $595 retail (although one can purchase a Roland for $550 direct from *Sierra*).

Having A Blast With Game Blaster and Sound Blaster

Two of the newer cards on the market are from **Creative Labs**. They are the **Game Blaster** and **Sound Blaster**. Game Blaster was an attempt to compete with AdLib by providing acceptable sound quality at a much lower price. The problem with the Game Blaster is that it does not meet acceptable quality standards. Developers have supported it in *some* titles, but all of these titles support the better FM synthesis technology more efficiently.

Sierra, one of the developers to support the board, suggested that Game Blaster was not quite what everyone was looking for and strongly requested some guidelines for a new board. (Sierra is *very* serious about sound support.) Enter the Sound Blaster. This new card personifies the expression "biggest-bang-for-the-buck." First and foremost, it uses the same FM synthesis chip as the AdLib board. Hence, it is fully AdLib compatible. Since this compatibility is completely transparent, a game which supports an AdLib supports the Sound Blaster whether it knows it does or not.

The Sound Blaster also comes with everything you need to record and play digitized sound effects and voices. The card is also capable of handling the better sounding 8-bit samples more prevalent today. AdLib's 6-bit samples sound quiet and tinny compared the 8-bit samples. The Sound Blaster also has text-to-speech capability and can read ASCII text files back to the user. Another important benefit of a Sound Blaster is the built-in game port, thus saving a slot and some money. One word of caution, however, is that this port is not "386 aware" yet. Thus, it may not be useable in faster 386's. The joystick port can be disabled so that a separate game port can be used. The Sound Blaster is also MIDI-compatible and an optional MIDI package can be purchased (should one wish to compose directly from a musical keyboard). This reviewer has found this board in stores for around $179, which includes many programs that give you complete control of every part of the board.

About The Others

Since the inception of quality PC-based sounds, other cards have come and, in some cases, already gone. **Covox** has developed a few products like *Speech Thing*, *Sound Master*, and *Voice Master*. The Voice Master is used by quite a few developers to record digitized voice samples. The other products have had minimal support, at best. Also in this category is the *Innovation* card which never really had a chance and *M-Sound* which has an interesting history in and of itself.

Advanced Gravis, makers of excellent gaming peripherals, bought a company called **Mountain Sound**, who were developing a product called M-Sound. Developers interviewed described the M-Sound like it was a dream come true. The problem was that nobody had actually *seen* one yet. M-Sound was supposed to provide CD-quality sound with 32 digitized voices and was to be AdLib compatible. When M-Sound finally showed up in developers' hands, not only wasn't it AdLib compatible but it also only supported 4 digitized voices! Beyond this, the original price was reported to be under $100. It is now selling for as much as a Sound Blaster. A major discount software chain apparently bought thousands of the boards and appears to be contacting developers in hopes of getting them to support M-Sound.

Counting Your Money

Making the decision as to which sound board to buy can be a trying experience.

(Continued on page 91)

Stormovik Over Europe

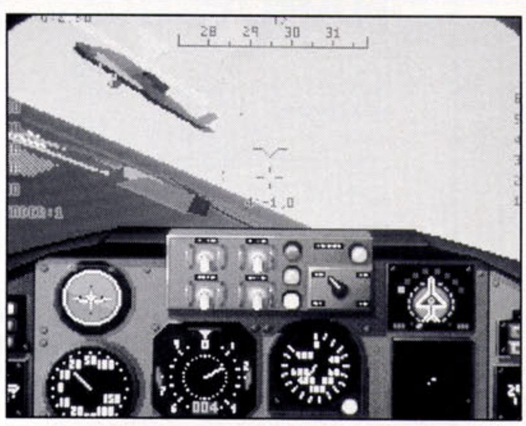
Electronic Arts' Stormovik: SU-25 Soviet Attack Fighter

by Stanley R. Trevena

As the Cold War thaws, the world is faced with a new crisis. After all, now that the Soviets are suddenly "on our side," we need a common enemy, a bad guy to rally against. Does Saddam Hussein have the muscle to really stand up against the combined might of the U.S. and U.S.S.R.? As it is, perestroika and glasnost have already affected the movies we watch, the books we read, and now, the games we play. *Tetris* was only the start of this Soviet invasion. Now, **Electronic Arts** is asking the gamers of the United States to fly the friendly skies of the Soviet Air Army in *Stormovik: SU-25 Soviet Attack Fighter* (*Stormovik*).



It seems, in the alternate history associated with this product, that perestroika and glasnost are having a negative effect on the profitable business of war. Thus, there is a group of individuals who have formed a partnership to bring life back to the war effort. These dissidents come from the upper ranks of national defense industries and will use whatever tools are at their disposal to destabilize relations between East and West. The tool of choice is terrorism and the recruits come from such training grounds as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the KGB, and the Secret Police. These terrorists are well supplied with the latest weapons from both sides. The player's role is to mount a counterattack on the terrorists that are responsible for border skirmishes during the reunification of Germany. Failure to quell this violence could pull the world into World War III.



The player must first enlist in the elite Red Guard Strike Force. There are four empty slots in the roster for new pilots. The player enters his name and has the option of adjusting his rank. Rank directly affects the type and amount of weapons allocated to the player's plane. Then one selects a time period in the German Reunification Conflict: 1991, 1992, or 1993. Each year increases in difficulty as the front line of the war advances from the Polish border toward central Germany. Once the time period is chosen, the pilot is given a selection of missions. There are ten missions for each year of the war, along with one practice mission (free flight).

The mission objectives are given and an approximation of possible opposition strength is presented to the pilot. This information is *very* important to players in the next phase, arming one's aircraft.

The SU-25 can carry five tons of ammunition. There are ten hardpoints on the SU-25 and the symmetry of the weapons load is very important to a successful conclusion of a given mission. The hardpoints are numbered one to ten from the left wing tip to the right. The "Q" key cycles choices toward the fuselage, and the "W" key cycles out toward the wing tips. For example, starting at the left wing and pressing "Q" repeatedly would cycle through hardpoints 1, 10, 2, 9, 3, 8 . . . etc . . . This may not seem of great importance until one flies his/her first mission and finds that he/she is cycling through hardpoints unnecessarily because of sloppy preparation. For those who have few preferences in this regard, there is always a mission default weapons load that can be selected.

Stormovik supports CGA, EGA, MCGA, VGA, and Tandy 16 color graphics. The SU-25 can be controlled via the keyboard, mouse, or joystick. Two settings are provided for mouse users: standard and high-resolution. I found that my Logitech mouse was a little too sensitive for the game, especially at low altitudes. Keyboard control is adequate, but most will find that the joystick provides the best overall control. Further, computer gamers are strongly advised to run *Stormovik* on the fastest machine they can find. It takes at least 8 Mhz to speed this program along efficiently. Fortunately, there is an option in the setup menu to adjust the level of detail in the program. This can compensate somewhat for a lack of processor speed. Finally, enhanced sound support is provided for AdLib and Tandy sound.

TITLE:	Stormovik: SU-25 Soviet Attack Fighter
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Paul Grace
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA

(Continued on page 70)



The Ad Lib Music Card: Open your ears and blow your mind.



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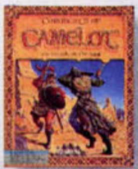
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New Compatible Games.

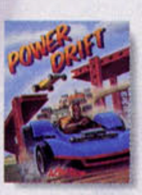
Here are just some of the hottest new computer games designed for use with the Ad Lib Music Card:



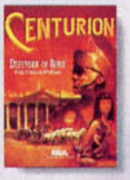
Sierra's Conquests of Camelot



Lucasfilm's Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain



Activision's Power Drift



Electronic Arts' Centurion



Capstone's Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure



Three-Sixty Pacific's Sands of Fire

System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.

Circle Reader Service # 32

See Reader Input Device on page 124

The Categories

Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem-solving.

Simulation (SI): Games based on first-person perspectives of real-world environments.

Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take an alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventure (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

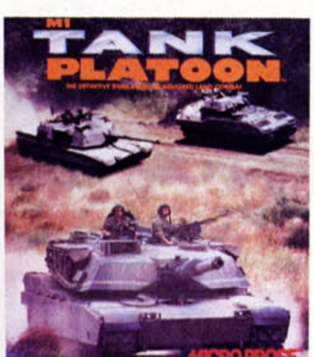
Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of that specific type.

Top Role-Playing



Top Simulation



THE TOP TEN GAMES

No.	Name	Source	Machine(s)	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
1.	*Their Finest Hour*	*LucasFilm*	*I*	*AC,SI*	*97*	*10.49*
2.	*Railroad Tycoon*	*MicProse*	*I*	*ST*	*76*	*10.40*
3.	*Ultima VI*	*Origin*	*I*	*RP*	*72*	*9.88*
4.	*Harpoon*	*Three-Sixty*	*I*	*WG*	*71*	*9.67*
5.	*SimCity*	*Maxis*	*Am,C,I,M*	*ST,SI*	*126*	*9.66*
6.	*M-1 Tank Platoon*	*MicProse*	*I*	*SI,WG*	*68*	*9.60*
7.	*MechWarrior*	*Activision*	*I*	*SI,RP*	*52*	*9.17*
8.	*Populous*	*EA*	*Am,I,ST*	*ST*	*116*	*9.15*
9.	*Hero's Quest*	*Sierra*	*I*	*AD,RP*	*54*	*9.12*
10.	*Red Storm Rising*	*MicProse*	*C64,I*	*SI*	*74*	*9.10*

No.	Name	Source	Machine(s)	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
11.	Battlehawks 1942	LucasFilm	Am,I,ST	AC,SI	87	9.06
12.	Bard's Tale III	EA	Ap,C	RP	74	9.03
	Ultima V	Origin	Ap,I	RP	102	9.03
14.	Lords of Rising Sun	Cnmwre	Am	AC,ST	53	9.01
	Wasteland	EA	Ap,C,I	RP	119	9.01
16.	Space Quest III	Sierra	Am,I,ST	AD	34	8.97
17.	Romance/3Kngdms	Koei	Am,I	ST,RP	31	8.96
	Starflight 2	EA	I	RP	62	8.96
19.	Indy: Adventure	LucasFilm	Am,I	AD	23	8.93
	Overrun	SSI	Ap,C	WG	24	8.93
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	Am,I	WG,ST	44	9.10
22.	Second Front	SSI	I	WG	38	8.92
23.	Dragon Wars	Interplay	Ap,C,I	RP	29	8.97
24.	Falcon	SpcHolo	Many	SI	62	8.90
25.	NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	ST	86	8.87
26.	Indianapolis 500	EA	I	SI	29	8.86
27.	Might & Magic II	NewWorld	Ap,C,I	RP	54	8.81
28.	LHX Attack Chopper	EA	I	AC	25	8.80
	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	Ap,C,I	RP	43	8.80
30.	Project Stealth Ftr	MicProse	C	SI	29	8.79
31.	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	30	8.77
	Battletech	Infocom	Am,I,ST	RP	48	8.77
	Leisure Suit III	Sierra	Am,I	AD	47	8.77
34.	Airborne Ranger	MicProse	C,I,ST	AC	74	8.76
35.	Bandit Kings	Koei	Am,I	ST,RP	28	8.75
	King's Quest IV	Sierra	Many	AD	58	8.75
37.	Jack Nick Unlimited	Accolade	I	ST	26	8.73
38.	Action Stations	CnflctAnlytic	I	WG	22	8.71
	Breach 2	Omnitrend	Am,I,ST	ST,RP	29	8.71
40.	Neuromancer	Interplay	Many	AD	33	8.70
	Nuclear War	New World	Am,I	ST	41	8.70
	Secret of Slvr Blades	SSI	C64,I	RP	47	8.70
43.	F-15 Strk Eagle 2	MicProse	I	SI	58	8.69
44.	Battlechess	Interplay	Many	ST	58	8.68
45.	Curse of Azure Bonds	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	70	8.67
	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	Ap,C	WG	43	8.67
47.	Ballistyx	Psygns	Am,ST,I	AC	20	8.65
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	Police Quest II	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	43	8.65
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51.	Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda	Am,I	AC,ST	38	8.64
52.	Pool of Radiance	SSI	Many	RP	116	8.61
53.	Champs of Krynn	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	65	8.60
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Pirates
Starflight
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

No.	Name	Source	Machine(s)	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
	It Came From Desert	Cnmware	Am,ST	AD	36	8.54
57.	A-10 Tank Killer	Dynamix	I	SI	40	8.53
	Future Wars	Interplay	Am,I	AD	24	8.53
59.	Carrier Command	MicroPlay	Am,I,ST	AC,WG	49	8.51
	DeathTrack	Activision	I	AC	29	8.51
	Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	WG	68	8.51
62.	Silent Service	MicProse	Many	SI	257	8.50
63.	Hostage	Mindscape	Am,I,ST	AC	28	8.47
64.	Manhunter 2	Sierra	Am,I,M,ST	AD	31	8.42
65.	TV Sports Football	Cnmwre	Am,I,ST	AC,ST	50	8.39
66.	Arkanoid	Dsc/Taito	Many	AC	69	8.38
	Wings of Fury	Brodbnd	Ap	AC	52	8.38
68.	Strike Fleet	EA	Ap,C,I	WG	79	8.37
69.	Fire Brigade	Panther	Many	WG	30	8.34
70.	Rocket Ranger	Cnmwre	Am,ST	AC,AD	75	8.32
71.	Modem Wars	EA	C,I	ST	24	8.29
	TV Sports Basketball	Cnmwre	Am,I,ST	AC,ST	33	8.29
73.	688 Attack Sub	EA	Am,I	SI,ST	59	8.27
	Drakkhen	Data East	Am	RP	32	8.27
75.	Manhunter	Sierra	Many	AD	72	8.25
76.	Centurion	EA	I	ST	49	8.24
77.	Police Quest	Sierra	Many	AD	98	8.23
78.	Starglider II	Rainbird	Am,I,ST	AC	65	8.22
79.	Jack Nick 18 Holes	Accolade	Am,C,I	AC,ST	28	8.21
	Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C,GS	AC	68	8.21
81.	Leisure Suit Lry II	Sierra	Many	AD	52	8.20
82.	Loom	LucasFilm	Am,I	AD	38	8.18
83.	Abrams Battle Tank	EA	I	AC,SI	31	8.16
84.	Colonel's Bequest	Sierra	Am,I	AD	28	8.14
85.	Tetris	SpcHolo	Many	AC,ST	46	8.13
86.	Conquests of Camelot	Sierra	Am,I	AD	33	8.12
	Vette!	SpcHolo	I	AC	26	8.12
88.	Stealth Mission	Sublogic	C	SI	36	8.11
89.	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	I	ST,RP	48	8.09
	Shiloh	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	54	8.09
91.	Knights of Legend	Origin	Ap,C,I	RP	26	8:08
92.	Speedball	Cnmware	Many	AC	35	8.06
93.	Russia	SSG	Ap,C	WG	61	8.05
94.	Sentinel Worlds	EA	I,C	RP	71	8.04
95.	Test Drive II	Accolade	Am,C,I	AC	42	8.02
96.	WC Leader Board	Access	Many	AC,ST	97	8.00
97.	Breach	Omnitrnd	Many	ST,RP	114	7.98
98.	Jordan vs Bird	EA	Many	AC	47	7.96
99.	Codename: Iceman	Sierra	Am,I	AD	32	7.92
	Prophecy	Activision	I	AC,AD	32	7.92

Top Strategy



Top Action



Top Adventure



Top Wargame



Scorpion's View

(Continued from page 46)



The music, however, is very good. As I mentioned in my other article ("Scorpion's Tale"), the right music can add much to the enjoyment of game play, and the tunes here are just right. Eerie, lively, ominous, or dramatic, the music is well-matched to mood and circumstance.

You *do* need a sound card, though, to hear the music at its best. I inadvertently hit the wrong choice during the initial setup and found that the PC speaker just doesn't cut it.

The interface is essentially the same as that in *Search For The King*: you use the mouse or arrow keys to move the main character around the screen and type in commands on the keyboard. This brings me to my next complaint.

Many times it was necessary to do a lot of intermediate maneuvering to get the character from one spot to another on the same screen. Click here. Click there. Now, click somewhere else to get him where you want him to be. Further, it was also necessary to be practically on top of an object before it could be picked up, or those dreaded words "you're not close enough" would appear.

This is ridiculous and frustrating. As *The Secret of Monkey Island* amply demonstrates, it is perfectly possible to program the character to move intelligently. Click where you want him to go, and he walks there on his own, avoiding intervening obstacles such as trees or tables. Tell him to pick something up, he walks over and picks it up.

Of course, this does not apply when getting somewhere or obtaining an item is part of a puzzle. However, most movement in these games is just going from one place to another, and should not require intricate maneuverings. The same holds true for acquiring objects. Getting them shouldn't be an exercise in exasperation as you try to move the character to the proper position.

Inventory management is important in this game. While the manual doesn't say so explicitly, P.J can carry a maximum of only seven items at once. This can be a real nuisance at times, requiring much running back and forth (or even restoring the

(Continued on page 92)

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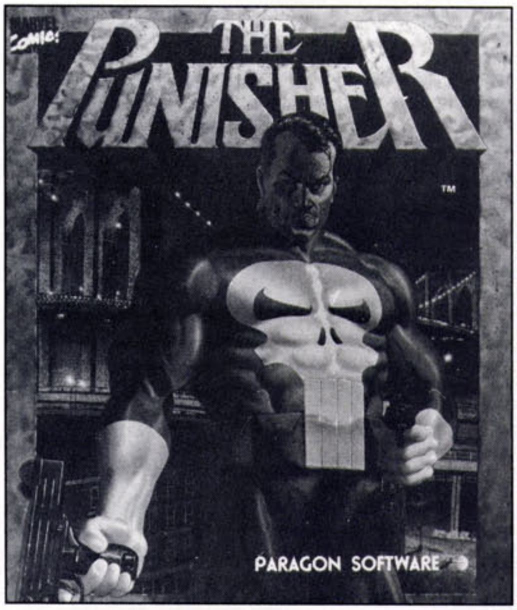
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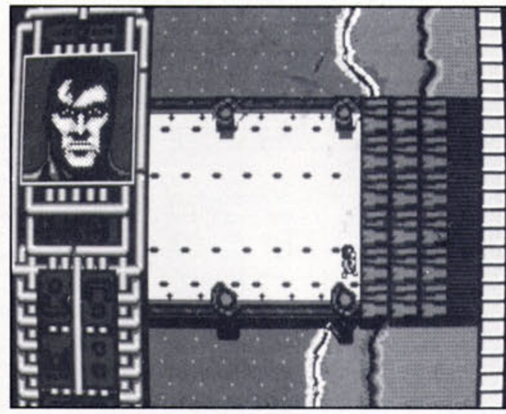
Crime and Punishment

Paragon Software's The Punisher

by Charles Ardai

TITLE:	The Punisher
SYSTEMS:	IBM
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNERS:	Andy Miller, Glenn Dill, Ann Gruss, and Mark Seremet
PUBLISHER:	Paragon Software Greensburg, PA





There are two New Yorks. One of them is a lot bigger, nastier, and more colorful than the other. One is the New York of the movies, of television cop shows, of Andrew Vachss novels, and of comic books like *The Punisher*. The other is the place I live. I'm not going to say which is which. At least, not right away.

Not too long ago, I spent a night lurking in some of the darker doorways of Times Square. Around midnight, I saw a man get mugged at the point of a butterfly knife. I didn't do anything but watch. The man didn't get knifed. Neither did I. The mugger got away with it and I'm absolutely certain he has committed the same crime since, probably many times. If he hasn't knifed anyone yet, eventually he will. That's New York.

Yesterday morning, just after dawn, I walked down by the Bowery. There were bodies sprawled on the sidewalks and in the street like your worst nightmare of an urban battlefield. The air was heavy with the stink of evaporated alcohol and hazy with a mix of marijuana smoke and pollution. There were old men with grey beards and wrinkled fingers in the gutters, riding the hard drugs in their veins, wincing behind closed eyes. Some of them never woke up, I expect. That's New York, too.

Then, today, I booted up *The Punisher*, **Paragon Software**'s computer game riff on characters and themes from the much-in-demand **Marvel** comic book (now a major motion picture, they tell me). In the game, I wore the gloves, boots, and ammo belt of a self-styled *uber*-vigilante named Frank Castle, whose mission in life (ever since the brutal murder of his family at Mob hands) is to rid New York of its criminal element. From a safe seat fifteen stories above the street, I iced drug dealers with relish, raced through the best and worst of New York neighborhoods, traced the drug scourge to its source and faced off with the kingpin himself, a huge juggernaut of a man—part Sydney Greenstreet, part Satan—appropriately named 'The Kingpin.'

When I left the computer, I felt good. Why? Because *The Punisher* is wish-fulfillment of the highest order, a *Death Wish* revenge fantasy mixed with an honest cry from the gut for justice. Here, in the Punisher's character, is a man who doesn't have to shrink into doorways rather than confront criminals. Here is a man who is doing something to change the conditions that put men and women on the streets in the Bowery. The things the Punisher does are stupid, even insane—they would accomplish nothing in the real world other than to get Frank Castle killed, and quickly at that. Still, the idea, the *fantasy*, is an extremely attractive one.

For real New Yorkers dealing with an all-too-real "unprecedented orgy of crime" (as the game's manual puts it), *The Punisher* scratches some major itches. So, I predict strong sales of *The Punisher* in urban areas around the country, for reasons of catharsis alone.

The real question, however, is whether the game will have much to say to people who do *not* have their own Punisher complexes implanted in them by their environments. In other words, the question is not only "Will it play in Peoria?", but "Will it play anywhere outside Manhattan?" The answer is a qualified "yes."

Not only is there no one so isolated as to be entirely untouched by crime and not only does the wide appeal of *The Punisher* comic books promise a similar appeal for the game, but **Paragon Software** has wisely crafted its product in such a way as to attract the widest possible audience.

For players who like top-down, combat-heavy RPG's, there's some of that. For players stuck in an arcade-action mode, there are first-person car chases and side-view underwater battles. For comic fans there are comic book-style narrative panels to introduce key points in the story.

For sensualists, Paragon offers really fine animation and digitized sound. For strategists, there are "macrogoals" (getting to the Kingpin, maintaining good relations with the police, keeping the battle van in good shape, etc.) which sometimes dictate sacrifices in individual action sequences.

For die-hard gamers, Paragon has an eight-dollar "Eternity Disk" containing fifty extra missions and a do-it-yourself construction kit. There's something for everyone, all presented with consummate skill and agreeable flair. (Such touches as the freedom to drive up on sidewalks and make on-a-dime U-turns show the

designers' commitment to creating a comic book level of excitement.)

So, why do I say a "qualified" yes? Because for all the excellence of the design, the game feels rough-hewn. Controls, especially, show insufficient forethought. Generally good graphics are occasionally wretched. The anti-piracy gambit is the most annoying one I have yet encountered. Worst of all, the product still seems to have bugs in it, not to mention errors of fact. (For instance, Carl Potts is credited prominently as the "creator of *The Punisher*", when devotees know that the credit should go to Gerry Conway and Ross Andru, who created the character in issue #129 of *Spider-Man*.)

To take these in order:

Control Freaks: There are three types of action sequences, as described above. The underwater battles only take place when the Punisher has to track criminals down on the fringes of Manhattan—in other words, infrequently. The action is enjoyable, if rudimentary. One swims until the computer decides one has swum far enough, dispatching villains along the way with a big knife.

The problems crop up in the car chases (getting to the scene of a crime) and the top-down (carrying out a mission) segments. In the former, one has to get out of driving mode in order to use the van's weapons, then select from among the three weapons (guns, grenades, and smokescreen), and then fire. This three-step process takes a lot of getting used to and never really becomes natural. Too often, one ends up with a smokescreen when one wants a grenade, or vice versa.

Similarly, there is a segmented combat process outside the van: one selects a weapon from inventory, loads it (as necessary), and fires/uses it. Too often, a player will forget which weapons he has and whether they are loaded, and the middle of a gun battle is no time to be checking one's inventory. Paragon recommends "jotting down key data," but this is hardly a solution since the data in this game changes so quickly.

The problem is complicated when the Punisher has to use a disguise to enter a hood's lair—then the player must remember to drop the disguise before trying to fire a weapon, since it won't work otherwise.

Movement is relatively smooth and, all in all, the sequences *are* enjoyable—it's just that the controls never become transparent. A less cumbersome combat process would have made the difference between a game that one wants to make excuses for and a game that one could recommend without reservation.

Graphic Violence: One has a similar resistance to recommending the game on the basis of its graphics. After a gorgeous (if oddly colored) opening sequence, the game's images are generally undistinguished. Buildings speeding by look like buildings; little effort has been made to make New York's landmarks stand out. Character animation is excellent in the underwater sequences, but the environment is completely bland. The top-down graphics in the mission segments are off-the-rack stuff—attractive, but imitative of any number of RPG's.

What will bother Punisher fans the most, however, is the violence that has been done to their hero. Frank Castle is often shown in the comics to have a certain madness about him, but the game takes unjustified liberties, painting him at times as a wide-eyed, grinning goon; a cartoony, trigger-happy nut; and a brooding, neckless Schwarzenegger. The Kingpin comes off even worse, when we finally meet him; a comic artist I lent the game to (who, understandably, asked to remain nameless) commented that he couldn't even have recognized this most famous of Marvel villains from his full-screen portrait, were it not for the character's giveaway baldness. The game's package art is incredible. Fair warning: it goes downhill from there.

Piracy, Errors, and Bugs: Before the game starts, players are asked to input a randomly selected word from the Player's Manual or the Technical Supplement—nothing too unusual these days, though since both documents are printed in black-on-white text (and therefore offer no obstacle to photocopying) the value of this annoyance is questionable. The real problem, however, is that the nature of the layouts makes the computer's instructions ambiguous. "Word 4, Page 16, Line 20"? Possibilities include: 'can,' 'be,' 'he,' and 'smoke,' depending on where you start counting. One has to be prepared to reboot several times before being allowed into the game, which is quite an indignity for legitimate buyers and only a trivial nuisance for pirates. Paragon should have been able to come up with something that penalizes pirates more than paying customers, I think.

Then, too, there are the occasional annoying errors: in my New York City (for instance) the numbering of buildings starts at Fifth Avenue, not at the East River (hence, the distinction between an "East Side" and a "West Side." The game wants to retain this distinction, but numbers its buildings straight across from First Avenue to Twelfth. New Yorkers will have to re-learn their geography to play this game, and non-New Yorkers will if they ever intend to visit the real thing. (Though playing this game would certainly not be approved by New York's Bureau of Tourism.)

Most annoying of all are what appear to be genuine, honest-to-gosh bugs. My first copy of the game froze my keyboard as soon as I got to the main menu screen. My second gave me a hard time with disk swaps, insisting that I hadn't yet inserted Disk B when, in fact, I had. My artist friend tells me that his keyboard froze in the middle of a game, to the point that though he could aim his guns, he could not fire. Some of this I expect can be blamed on my hand-built-from-spare-parts system, but just how much I'm not sure.

Regarding all of the above, then: fair warning.

Still and All

All things considered, comic-based computer games have not fared very well. Consider, for example, the various *Superman* action games that have come out over the years, not to mention the miserable adventure-game versions of *The Incredible Hulk* and *Spider-Man*. There seems to be a difficulty in translating the graphic narrative form to the computer screen: one either ends up with shallow arcade action or dry, plodding "interactive fiction"—or, worse still, some wilting hybrid that fails on both scores.

The Punisher is the first such hybrid that succeeds, and, as such, is the best comic-based game currently available. It sacrifices a good deal of the original's moral complexity, though not all, and something in the way of depth of plot, but it still provides a fast-paced and refreshing entertainment. I will be very surprised if the forthcoming movie is any more successful at recreating the world of the Punisher than the game is, or if it is any more enjoyable.

Paragon Software has successfully captured the spirit and intent of *The Punisher* comic book, a difficult task for which they deserve high praise. Those problems that the software exhibits are all the sort that could easily be corrected should strong sales make the release of an updated version feasible.

The Punisher 2.0, anyone? **CGW**

Stormovik Over Europe

(Continued from page 62)

Stormovik is billed as using 3D polygon graphics with up to 256 colors. The disappointing truth is that this is *only* exploited in the introductory screens and cockpit; all external views are, at most, 16 color. The 16 colors are from the 256-color palette on VGA systems, but the out-of-cockpit view and all external views are virtually indistinguishable from those of the EGA mode. *[Ed: Designer Paul Grace noted that* Stormovik *does not use gradient-filled skies (i.e. the game has a one-color sky) and stated that they decided against gradient-filled skies as a trade-off for a faster frame-rate. If the sky is gradient-filled and the horizon banks during flight, the mathematics require additional calculations for each variation in color. Thus, it slows down the simulated air speed of the vehicle. It is obvious that this can be a problem for those who absolutely must have the best of all possible graphics, but Paul felt that frame rate was more important than sky color in terms of playability.]*

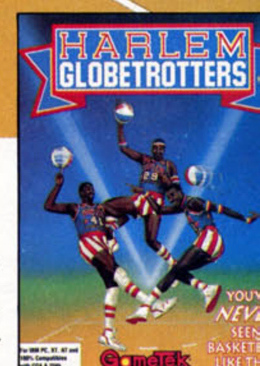
Another shortfall is in the design of the cockpit. A great deal of shading is used to give the interior of the cockpit a slick 3D look; however, the detail of the lights and gauges were sacrificed for this look. The numbers on the gauges are almost unreadable and the indicator lights and waypoint selector have no markings. Maybe the designers felt that English alphabet markings on the gauges and indicators would have diminished the feel of the game. In fact, the lack of identifiable markings on the gauges and indicators actually impairs game play. Even the pseudo-Cyrillic script of the Russian sub in *688 Attack Sub*, another Paul Grace design, would have been better than no markings at all.

In *Stormovik*, the player does not encounter the wide dispersement of enemies that populated the battlefield in *LHX Attack Chopper*. Rather, there are strong, dense pockets of resistance to contend with. Often during a flight the player gets the sense that the terrorists are far more numerous and better armed than expected. In fact, one aspect of the game that is unnerving is the presence of F-117 Stealth Fighters. These planes do not appear on your radar and you will not know that they are there until it is too late. One of the missions in 1992 actually involves tracking down and destroying two F-117's visually with the player only knowing their point of origin and approximate destination.

In flying the SU-25, the player *does* sense that he is not flying a small plane. Controls are not as quick or responsive as the small jets some desktop pilots may have earned their wings flying. Further, the player will find that landings are far too easy, even at the highest levels and ranks. This reviewer once brought a plane in at too steep a descent and bounced it off the runway. The game *still* regarded the plane as having been landed undamaged. Believe it or not, this occurred even at the highest rank with "easy landings" disabled.

It is apparent that *Stormovik* is a direct descendant of *LHX Attack Chopper*. Unfortunately, "recycled" may be a better term for describing *Stormovik*'s relationship to *LHX*. There seems to be too much old and not enough new material in this game. If *Stormovik* is to succeed it must differentiate itself from the simulation market and seek out its place among the action games. This program is *not* a simulation. Flight simulation fans should be cautioned against purchasing this program. However, all fans of *LHX Attack Chopper* will feel right at home in the cockpit of the SU-25. Deficiencies aside, this writer found it strangely appealing to roam the skies over Germany, hunting down and destroying *both* NATO and Warsaw Pact hardware. **CGW**





The Harlem Globetrotters bring their brand of high-speed action to the court on your computer. With all the finesse you'd expect from top professionals, plus famous trick passes like the heel kick and incredible trick shots like the full-court hook - you've got basketball game play like you've never seen it before. So, if you're looking for a nice game, then buy just any old basketball game. But if you're looking for the ultimate challenge, then get Harlem Globetrotters Basketball!

GameTek®

Hammering Herman

Seven Swords Straight to the Heart of the Luftwaffe in Their Finest Hour

by Roger White



"Blimey, it's hot. Bad enough the sun's got us, much less the whole bloody Luftwaffe wantin' to play tag."

"Now don't cause a fuss. There's nothing we can do about either. Be glad it's a bit slower today and we've got time to use the W.C. between missions for a change."

"It's when you canna' use it that you'll be most needin' a change, laddie."

The laughter died down as Major Hawkins trudged across the field to the aerodrome with a tired but measured tread. His grim expression and fatigue sobered the other pilots.

"The Major's looking shagged. What's his secret, you know? 'Ow'd he get all them kills, eh? That's what I want to know."

Playing the RAF

Playing the Royal Air Force (RAF) in **LucasFilm**'s *Their Finest Hour* is fighter combat at its purest. RAF Fighter Command isn't concerned with anything on the ground. The challenge comes in learning to deal with the idiosyncrasies of the seven kinds of Luftwaffe aircraft that come flying over the channel.

The goal of the RAF in campaign mode is to survive the Luftwaffe onslaught. If the Fighter Command, the fighters and their airfields survive, then the Germans won't invade Britain. For the player as RAF Commander to survive, one must not only have to shoot down Luftwaffe planes, but also keep the RAF aloft while spoiling Luftwaffe bombing runs.

Tip One

Luftwaffe bombers are hurt most easily by diving attacks head-on and to their sides. The Luftwaffe will approach the target from several directions and at several altitudes, so to get the most opportunities for head-on and side attacks, stay in the immediate target area until the last wave has come. Use the in-flight map to keep track of who's coming and who's going. If there is a momentary lull in the melee, use half inside and half outside loops to climb to 10,000 feet so as to be ready to dive down again.

Tip Two

Incoming bombers are easy to approach and, if disturbed sufficiently by attack, they will drop their bombs before they get to their targets or, if they do drop on target, have a higher percentage of misses. Be sure to concentrate on *incoming* bombers. Once a bomber drops his payload, drop it as a target and find a fresh, incoming one. Don't be too tempted to finish off wounded bombers until after all the incoming targets have been properly harassed.

This is a difficult art to master. On one occasion, this reviewer saw a bomber crew bailing out, its rear gunner still firing away, and all the while its bombs were being dropped! One can almost hear the captain of that doomed Luftwaffe craft speaking to his veteran crew:

"Achtung, leute. Der bad news iss ve are going down. Ze Fuhrer expects each of you to take der 500lb bomben mit you as you bail. Ze good news iss you vill die glorious heroes of ze Reich. Sieg heil!"

Tip Three

Don't be tempted to fire at long range. Those Luftwaffe level bombers are big planes, and the natural tendency is for one to shoot them while they are still out of range because they start filling up so much of the screen compared to fighters. Resist the temptation and get in close before opening fire! *Rule of thumb*: never start shooting before the enemy plane does. They always open up at the longest possible effective range, so by shooting first it's almost certain that the target isn't close enough yet.

Tip Three-and-a-half

Save your ammo because there are a lot of targets out there in a melee and it takes a lot of lead to bring down the level bombers. The way to save ammo is to get in close before shooting. Since British fighters fire "harmonized" bullets, whenever attacking close in they impact the same point on an enemy plane and do lots of damage. Remember, get in close, *then* shoot!

Tip Four

Turn tight, because that is the speciality of British fighters. Tip the wings to vertical, pull back on the joystick and scream through those 360 degree turns in seconds flat. Tight turns are guaranteed to shake off any Luftwaffe pursuer, but when seeing bullets whizzing by from behind, be sure to turn away from them and not into them!

Tip Five

Dare to slow down because RAF planes are faster than most Luftwaffe planes and can turn "inside" (tighter than) all of

(Continued on page 114)

OLYMPIC DECATHLON COMPETITION

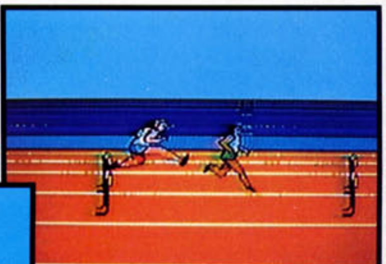
Carl Lewis

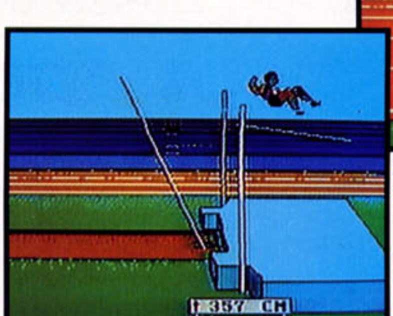
GO FOR THE GOLD



Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold is the ultimate computer challenge of skill and coordination. Compete in the Decathlon against Carl Lewis-the six time Olympic Gold medalist-or you can be Carl Lewis and try to live up to his world renowned reputation.

So, if you think that you're up to it; give it a try-Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold. It's guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.





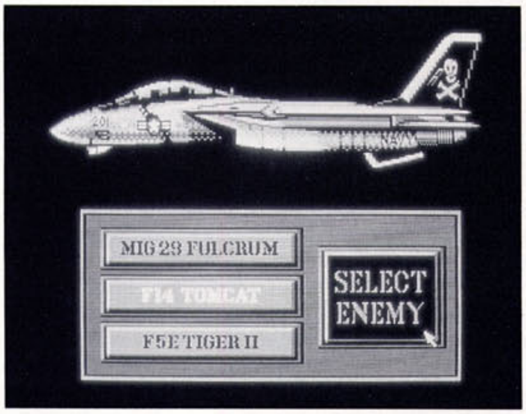
Screens shown are from the IBM version.

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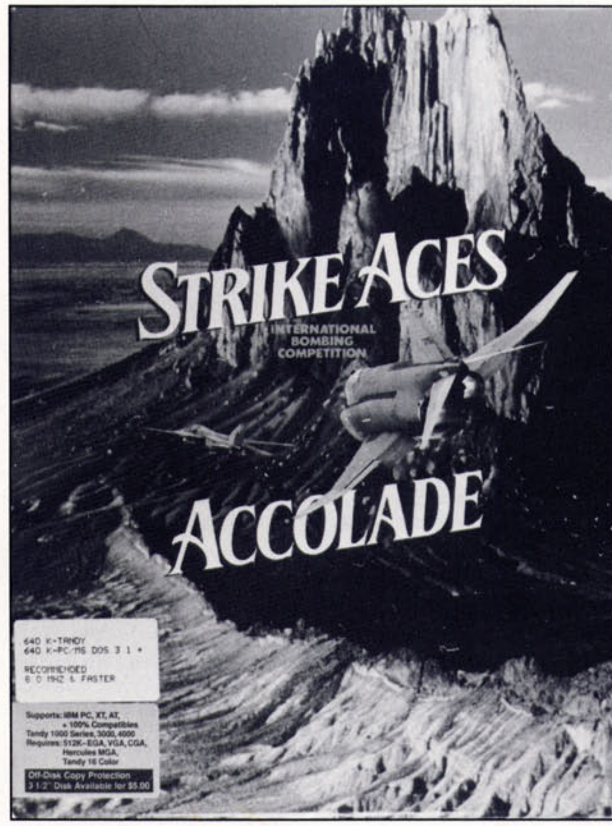
Bomber, Man

Targeting Accolade's Strike Aces

by Lt. H. E. Dille



Title:	Strike Aces: International Bombing Competition
Systems:	IBM, Amiga, C-64/128
Price(s):	$49.95 except C-64/128 ($39.95)
Designers:	Andy Craven, Ciaran Gultnieks, Ian Martin (Vektor Grafix)
Publisher:	Accolade San Jose, CA



The aviation simulation market is more crowded than the holding pattern at New York's JFK International Airport on Christmas Eve day. As such, new arrivals must jockey for position from the time they are first conceived or face domination by the accepted "classics" of the genre. To be successful in this endeavor, these products must be innovative in concept or design, and offer new features or improved graphics. *Strike Aces* incorporates the first principle quite well, particularly in terms of diversity. Players may pilot one of six aircraft types against up to seven different "enemy" airframes. Additionally, the non-violent premise of an international bombing competition will appeal to some players, despite the fact that destruction still occurs on-screen. (The manual disclaimer states that this is so players could "see what would have happened if it had been real".) The program is less successful, however, in terms of mechanical or graphic improvement over prior releases.

Pre-Flight Briefing

When a player pilot is first ready to begin, he will have the option of choosing which aircraft to fly from the following list: F-4E, F-15E, F-111F, MiG-27 Flogger-D, Panavia Tornado IDS (RAF and Luftwaffe) and the Saab AJ37 Viggen (Royal Swedish Air Force). There are both two-dimensional and three-dimensional representations of each aircraft in the selection process. The 2-D screens are beautifully detailed bit-map renditions of each aircraft profile, while the 3-D display gives a rotating cinema shot of the aircraft (using polygon graphics) taxiing down a runway and taking off.

Once an aircraft is selected for that pilot, he is unable to fly any other aircraft, regardless of mission. All of the other aircraft types may still be flown, but each must have its own specific pilot. This precludes players from making their character's pilot into a "Super Jet Jock," capable of flying anything faster than the speed of sound. This restriction, which may seem unnecessary to some players, is both realistic and important to the balance of the overall game. This is because in order to progress to the title of Strike Ace, players must complete sixteen missions in linear order. Some missions are "easier" for some aircraft types than others, and vice versa. As such, restricting pilots to one aircraft balances the campaign, regardless of the type of aircraft flown.

Prior to each mission, players select the aggressor force they will face from the following list: F-14, F-16, F-5E Tiger II, Mirage 2000, MiG-29, MiG-31 and Su-27 Flanker. Although players may determine the ordinance mix for their aircraft, they are unable to interface with aggressor aircraft in any way other than through their HUD (Heads Up Display) during an engagement. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both friendly and aggressor aircraft will allow players some degree of control over the difficulty of each scenario. As an example, if one is flying an F-15E against a Su-27, things will be a lot easier than when facing opposition from a MiG-31. It is important to remember, however, that there are no bonus rounds for shooting down the enemy CAP exclusive of mission accomplishment. Ideally, one should strive to get to the target without engagement, accomplish the mission and return home to use the aircraft another day. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your point of view), this is difficult to do. Players will find it difficult to get to the drop point without being "bounced" by the enemy fighters.

Intelligence Report

Before any "Hot Stick" enters the actual competition, it is a good idea to spend some time in the "free flight" portion of the program. The Mt. Rushmore scenario is cute, and begins by hurtling the player on a collision course with the famous four faces.

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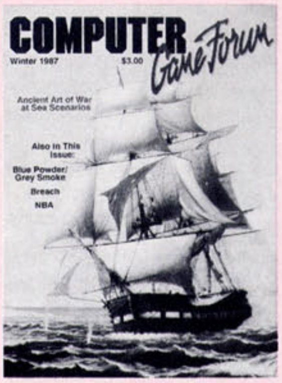
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After that disaster is averted, players may use this segment of the game to practice takeoff and recovery, high-altitude maneuvers, bombing runs and even in-flight refueling. The latter segment is as critical in later missions as it can be in the real world. To be successful, one must exactly match altitude and airspeed, carefully refining one's position "in the slot" until the refueling probe is seated in the drogue. It is tricky even for seasoned pilots, so practice while the opportunity presents itself.

Within the competitive missions, there are four categories: Covert, Tactical, Strategic and Offensive. Each category has four missions of ascending complexity. Beginning with "milk runs," the player will find that things rapidly become more complex. Friendlies are often co-located with the desired target, requiring pin-point precision to avoid disaster. Enemy air support becomes both more prominent and more persistent. Exact navigational information is not always available, making timing and coordination more difficult. In-flight refueling will become second nature and one must master mission planning to ensure the proper weapons mix for the target objective.

As one gains familiarity with the nuances of mission planning brought out by the scenarios, it is inevitable that players will aspire to create scenarios of their own. **Accolade** has anticipated that contingency. *Strike Aces* includes a Mission Design Kit that allows players to create new missions on the existing area map. Starting and landing airfields are selected, targets are placed and designated, refueling points are added (if needed or desired), and one can attach text to targets, as well as input Mission text. The interface is mouse-driven and a scenario can be designed, loaded and run in a few minutes.

Bombing Run

This reviewer would rather sit through twelve hours of "Zamphir Plays the Classics on the Pan Flute," head encased in cheap blue plastic airline headphones, than watch one more on-screen explosion represented by spinning, expanding red triangles against a black dot background. Didn't anyone at **Accolade** listen a while back when everyone raved about the bit-mapped explosions in **Dynamix**'s *A-10 Tank Killer*? Without getting petty about this single issue, the underlying point is that *Strike Aces* does nothing whatsoever to advance graphic standards. The bit map cockpits are nicely rendered, but standard polygon-fill routines portray both the landscape and the external views of aircraft. While features such as Mt. Rushmore and the scenic dinosaur replica in Rapid City, South Dakota are nice touches, the vast majority of the terrain is flat and featureless. Mountains leap straight out of the ground, resembling pyramids to such a degree that one expects to fly by and see some New Age cultist perched on top awaiting the return of the UFO's. Although there is a noticeable improvement in the frame scroll rate over **Accolade**'s last foray into the aviation world, *Blue Angels*, sophisticated users will find that graphics alone will not draw them to purchase the product.

Also, as audio quality becomes increasingly important and users spend hard-earned dollars on sound board additions, it is disturbing to read the back of the box claim to support a given

(Continued on page 82)

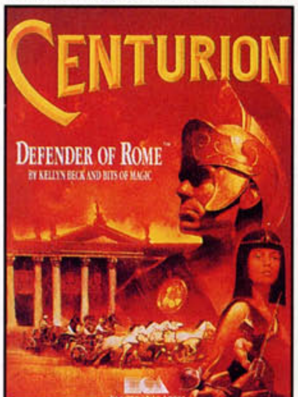
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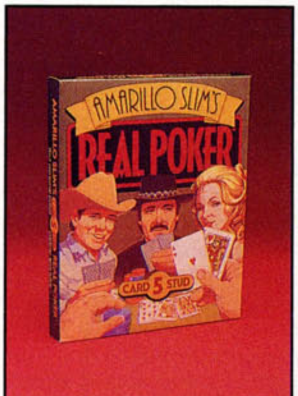
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'AMARILLO SLIM'S REAL POKER 5 CARD STUD' from **Villa Crespo Software** is more than just another poker game. It is your personal poker **TUTOR**. With features like player style options and statistics accumulation this is the best poker game anywhere.

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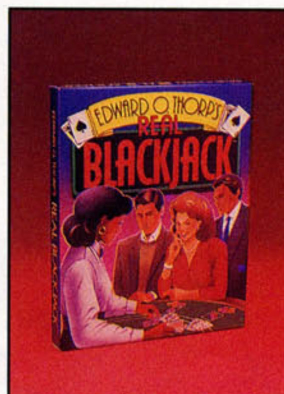
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'EDWARD O THORP'S REAL BLACKJACK' from **Villa Crespo Software** is more than just another blackjack game. With built in **TUTOR,** up to six players, unattended play, and statistics accumulation, this is the best blackjack game anywhere.

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board (the **AdLib** in this case) simply because the opening theme and one or two other infrequent screens use it (while the majority of the program uses the internal speaker). Since this limited sound support is the case, then, the product's packaging should read something closer to the truth, such as: "Actual AdLib support time less than one minute per play session." That way, at least, consumer expectations will not be led astray. As it is, once the player enters the cockpit, the "engine noise" produced by the internal IBM speaker is a mind-numbing white static that players will almost certainly toggle off immediately.

Tally Ho!

Although one might gather that *Strike Aces* has "struck out" from the prose up to this point, that's not entirely true. As stated in the introduction, diversity is one of the strengths of this product. Many players have already flown other simulators for the F-15 and the F-111 (*Strike Eagle* and *Thud Ridge*, respectively) but few have had an opportunity to joyride in any of the other aircraft depicted. In the spirit of *glasnost*, a MiG-29 recently performed at the International Air Show in Dayton, Ohio. This unprecedented event is echoed in the software industry as many of the major developers are planning products based on Soviet aircraft. *Strike Aces* will be remembered as the first to accomplish that milestone.

As to the other airframes depicted, each has unique qualities that may be discerned through repeated play. The Tornado is a joy to fly, as an example, and much easier to land, due to a better lift ratio, than the F-15, which drops out of the sky like a slightly buoyant rock. Unfortunately, since all of the aircraft flight routines are driven off a single program engine, every characteristic is not as discernibly different as one might like. Turn rates are particularly homogenized, but there are enough dissimilarities to keep dogfighting a challenge.

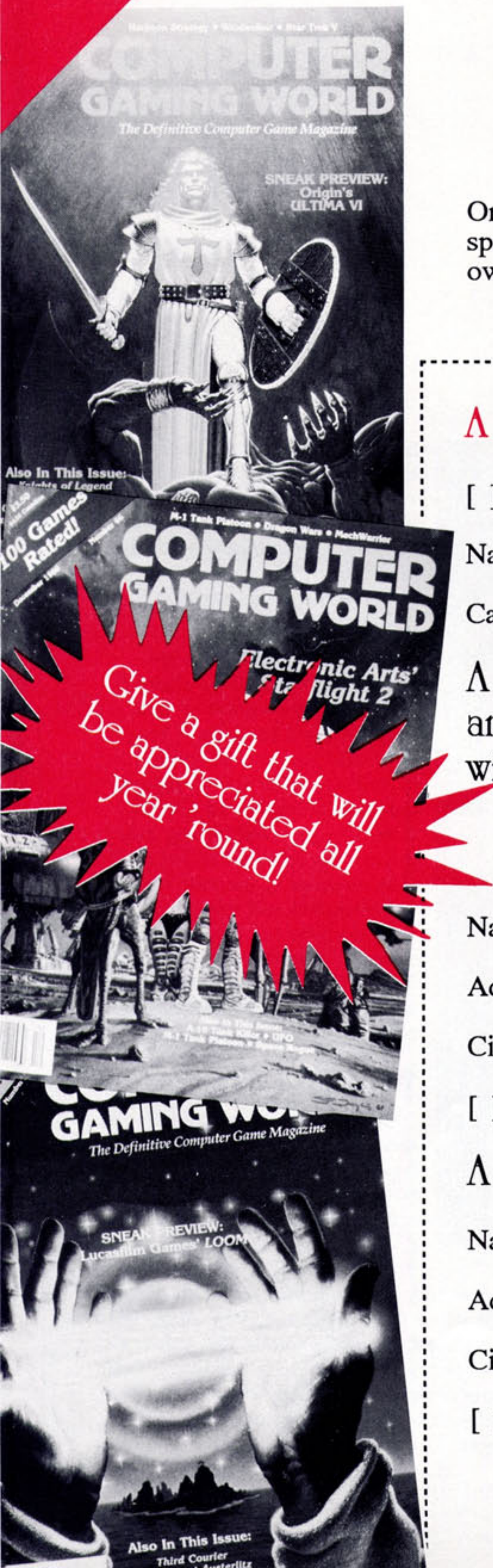
On Final

Computer gaming enthusiasts are not unlike their counterparts in other endeavors; they tend to associate brand name to quality. **Accolade**'s strong reputation has been built on a long list of top-notch products and, at first appearance, it would seem that they did not live up to their own standards on this product. In all fairness to **Accolade**, however, this was not entirely their fault. *Strike Aces* was originally released in the UK under a different title by another company. After agreeing to distribute the title in the US, Accolade made thirty-two recommendations for changes to bring the product in line with other "state of the art" releases. Unfortunately, due to contractual disputes, only ten of these changes were made prior to *Strike Ace*'s arrival on the shelves. One might still argue that the product should not have been released until Accolade was fully satisfied with it, but they are certainly considering this one a "lesson learned."

Considered in the aggregate, *Strike Aces* is not a *bad* product; it simply did not live up to its potential in execution. Some portions, like the aforementioned in-flight refueling sequences, are quite good. As such, this product must be considered a "mixed bag," certain to appeal to die-hard computer aviators but not destined for greatness in the eyes of the general gaming public.

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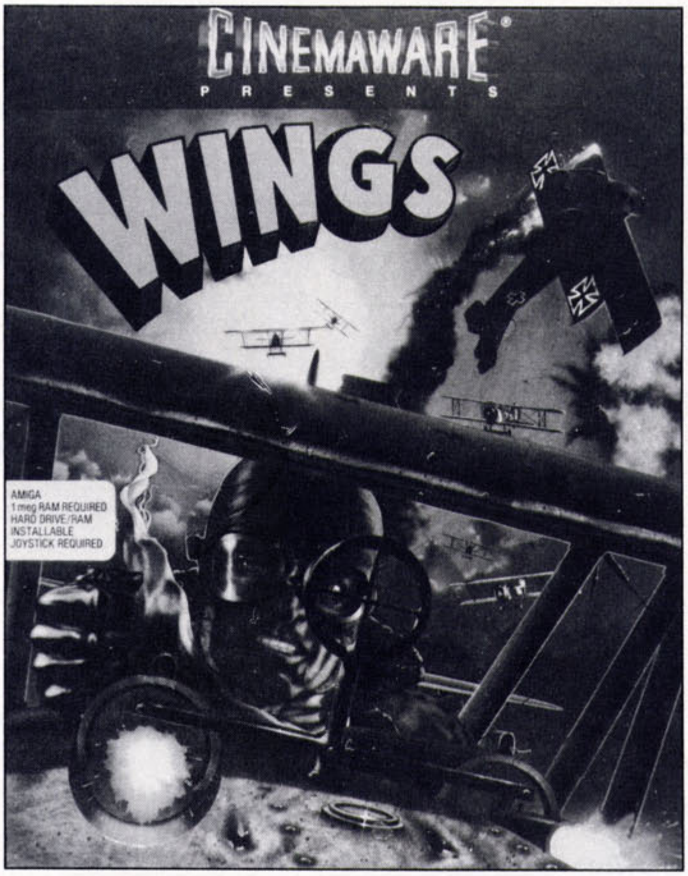
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World War I? Enjoy the Flap from *Wings*

by Allen L. Greenberg

TITLE:	Wings
SYSTEM:	Amiga
PRICE:	$49.95
PUBLISHER:	Cinemaware



Caution: Don't seek to convince the youthful pilot that just because his mama put a quarter in the slot and there happens to be several wires supporting his aircraft *and* his flight path consists of the same pre-determined circle, that he isn't flying a real airplane. Similarly, a fighter enmeshed in **Cinemaware**'s *Wings* may not wish to be told that his or her exercises may bear only a superficial resemblance to flying combat in the first World War. While some serious pilots will dismiss this program as merely an overly streamlined flight simulator, *Wings* is really a whopping good arcade experience. The game is further enhanced by the presence of dramatic scenes between action sequences.

A View From Above The Trenches

Taking place between 1916 and 1918, *Wings* unfolds as a personal narrative of that great war, from the perspective of a young American pilot. In somewhat wide-eyed "Oh-gosh-oh-gee-whiz" terminology, the fighter recounts his story, which is illustrated by both his own aerial adventures and wartime newspaper headlines. In well-designed contrast to the spirited arcade nature of the action sequences, these narrative links appear to be historically accurate while also explaining the significance of the individual missions.

Airplane control is performed entirely with the joystick. In the *Wings* school of flight, as the package-notes indicate, there are no complex keyboard commands to call on while flying. There are also no gauges to read, nor even any displays to indicate such critical information as distance above the ground. All this data must be interpreted by the player from Cinemaware's trademark true-to-movies graphics.

The majority of battles are played from within the cockpit, using the pilot's point of view. This view is a bit narrow, however, and may cause some frustration when enemy planes dance effortlessly into a blind spot. The player-pilot may switch the display to either of the two side windows or the rear window. However, this still reveals only a limited portion of the battle space. Unlike many other combat-flight simulators, an external view of the flying action is not available.

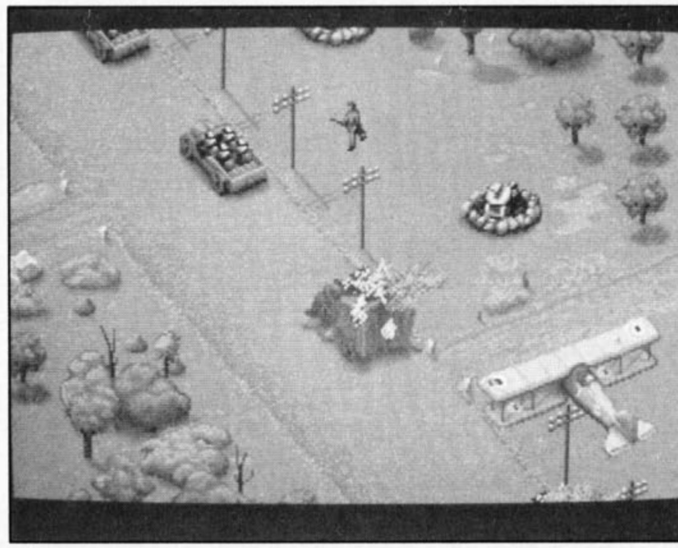
What You See . . .

There are two other sequences, however, for which the player has *only* an external view of the battle. A strafing sequence uses a three-dimensional perspective of roads lined with infantry, tents and vehicles. The player flies overhead, machine guns blazing. This is similar to the by-gone (but very popular) arcade game from **Synapse**, *Blue Max*. The resulting mayhem includes objects which explode and soldiers who moan and roll over in pools of blood. There are also bombing assignments which are viewed from directly over the plane. The landscape scrolls beneath while enemy fighters descend from the opposite direction.

A Flyboy's Life

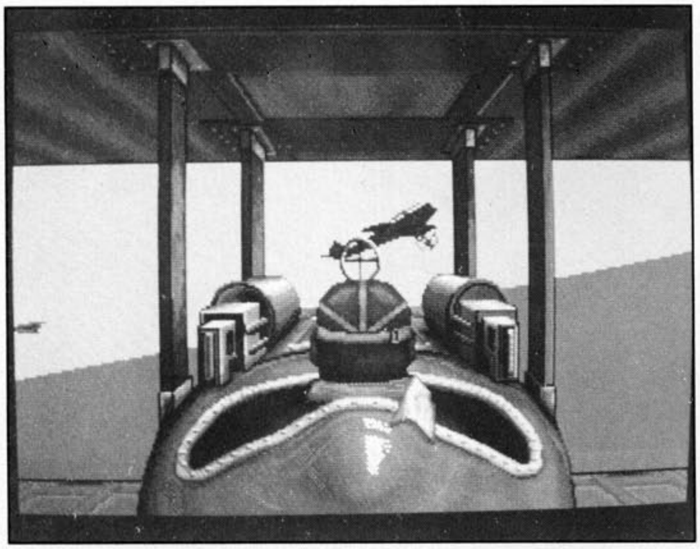
Wings also includes some role-playing features. Each pilot enters the game with a small number of ability-points. These are for the player to distribute among the attributes of flying, shooting, mechanics and stamina. Players in the roles of pilots who possess greater flying and shooting ratings will have an easier time controlling their planes and bringing down the enemy. A low rating in mechanics will cause the player's guns to jam more frequently during combat—an experience sure to draw exclamations from players as least as loud as "the shot heard round the world." Stamina reflects the pilot's ability to survive a forced landing, which is the only time in the game a player needs to worry about landing his plane. As the pilot survives and succeeds in bringing down more enemy planes, the ratings in each category will rise an appropriate amount.

There are over 230 missions in the campaign game which is *Wings*, the majority of which are of the dogfight/combat variety. An important note is that these will probably *not* be carried out by the same pilot. According to the excellent historical background which accompanies the program, pilots were often not expected to live more than a few weeks once they began their duty. The player must replace fallen pilots with rookies who must, again, build up their abilities. While pilots come and go, a complete game of *Wings* begins and ends concurrent with the war. Of course, no one likes to observe the passing of a favorite character, and one need not do so as long as there are blank disks available.



Mission: Possible

As players progress through the war, they can expect the missions to become increasingly more challenging. In the earliest dogfights, the enemy is usually found at a delightfully lower altitude than the hero. The enemy will also often cooperate by facing the opposite direction until the attack is upon him. Also, as if by some special arrangement, the enemy has volunteered



to go venturing out in manageably small numbers. Also, the American fighter has other members of his squadron alongside to back him up. This may be frustrating for some players who will lose credit for a kill because a digitized buddy manages to get the final shot at an enemy plane which the player has just finished pounding.

Soon, enemy planes will appear in greater numbers, forcing the odds to creep slowly towards the other side. Similarly, enemy planes will begin to appear from the more dangerous positions which are above and behind the pilot. During the strafing missions, targets will be more difficult to follow and the player will find avoiding ground fire a more strenuous activity. There will also be a number of Red Cross vehicles which must not be harmed if the pilot is to receive full credit for his otherwise successful efforts.

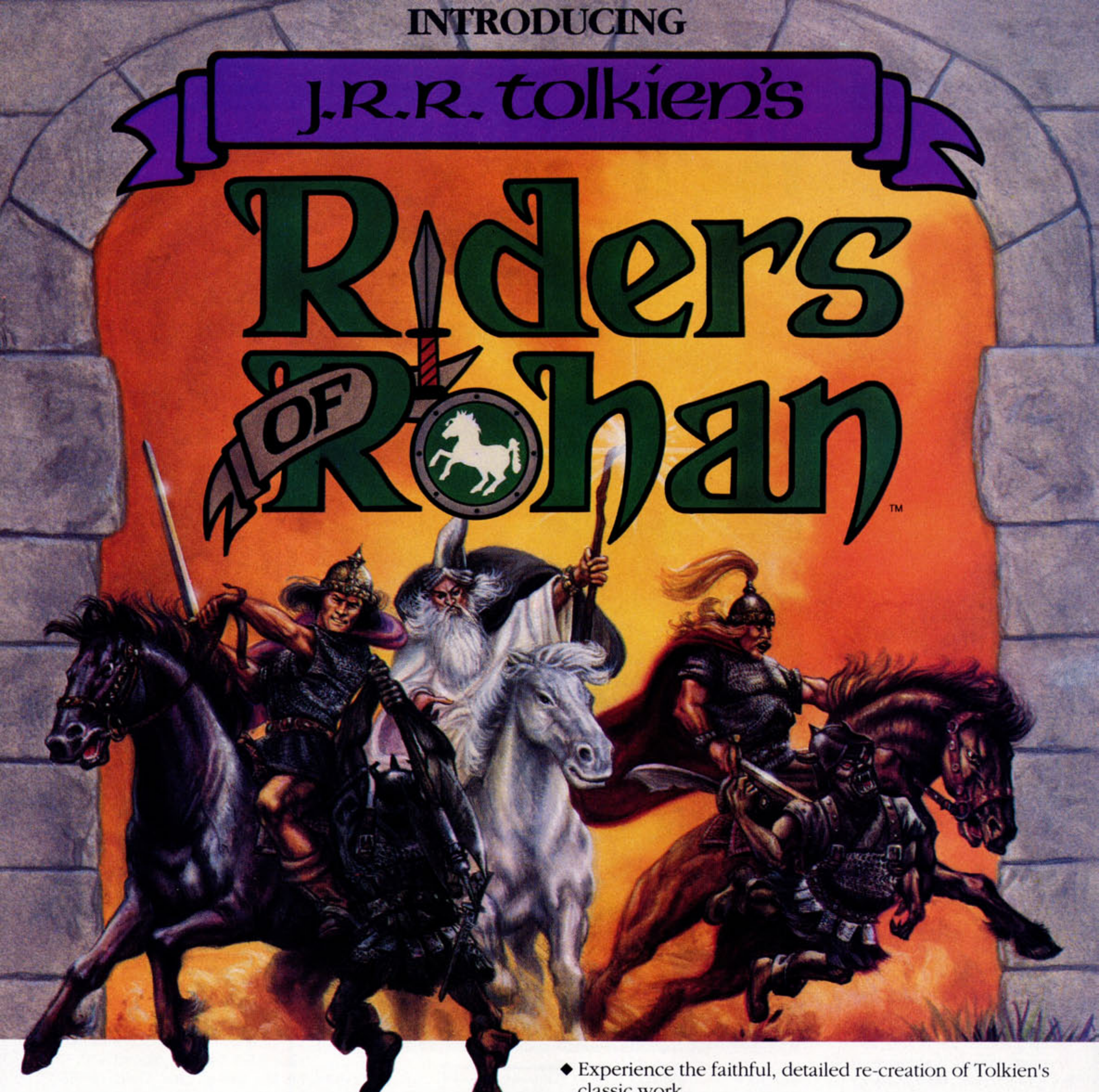
"Switch on. Contact!"

Wings is supplied on two (Amiga) disks. Copy protection is strictly by the manual, and a key word must be supplied whenever a new pilot is introduced to the squadron or at the beginning of a session when a game in progress is resumed. Only one game in progress may be stored on a disk. However, by manipulating disks or files, players will easily find ways to store multiple games. The program may be installed on a hard drive and this is strongly recommended—there is a lot of drive access during play. Lucky owners of an Amiga with at least three megabytes of RAM will be able to install the program in memory and forget about that problem. Amiga owners must also remember to close all non-essential windows (as is the case with most Cinemaware releases for that machine) or the program will crash (thus depriving the pilot of his chance to do so).

It would probably be a mistake to judge *Wings* in the same category as other, more serious combat/flight simulations such as **Lucasfilm**'s triumphant *Their Finest Hour*. *Wings* has a unique look and feel to it which makes it an exciting, novel and addicting offering from Cinemaware and well worth checking out.

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Circle Reader Service #75

You'll See SPOT Before You're Wise

Virgin Mastertronic's Abstract Strategy Game

by Wyatt Lee



TITLE:	SPOT: The Computer Game
SYSTEMS:	IBM, Nintendo
# PLAYERS:	1-4
PRICE:	$39.99
DESIGNER:	Graeme Devine
PUBLISHER:	Virgin Mastertronic Irvine, CA

Imagine a game where, after a few preliminary moves, every move can change the face of the game board. Imagine a game where the player's strategy is echoed by a cute cartoon choreography designed to rub salt in the open wounds of one's opponents. Imagine a game with nine levels of sophisticated computer opponents, as well as an option for one to four human competitors. Imagine a game where the basic "checkerboard" playing surface can be modified into more than 500 different configurations. This is what the player experiences in *SPOT: The Computer Game*.

"Perplex'd in the extreme . . ." (*Othello*, Act V, Scene 2)

SPOT: The Computer Game bears some resemblance to the boardgame *Othello*. Those who have played the boardgame (or experienced it as *Renaissance* or *Reversi* on the computer) may well sympathize with the quotation from the game's namesake.

In the game of *Othello*, players place a two-toned tiddlywink so that it forms a "bookend" with another tiddlywink the same color. Then, all the opposite-colored tiddlywinks which are in-between the "bookend" tiddlywinks must be turned over so that they are "transformed" into the same color as the "bookend" tiddlywinks. Hence, entire lines of tiddlywinks can be changed every move. Sometimes, the game seemed more like a tedious time of turning tiddlywinks back and forth than figuring out one's strategy. Also, you could only play against one opponent at a time. Computerizing *Othello* made the game much more accessible. One no longer had to turn the "tiddlywinks" over, but play was still limited to one opponent. *SPOT* takes the idea of transforming "tiddlywinks" to a new plane by adding new moves, new opponents, new board configurations and an optional time limit for moves.

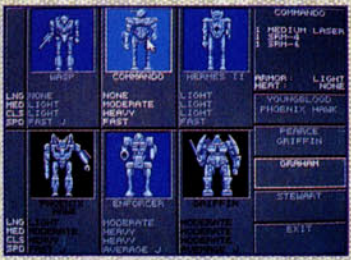
In *SPOT*, one places his or her "tiddlywink" adjacent to as

(Continued on page 112)

STRIKE BACK



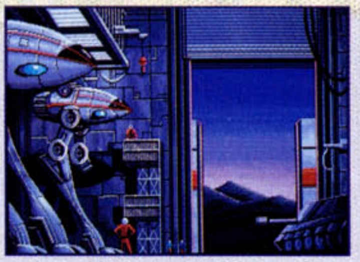
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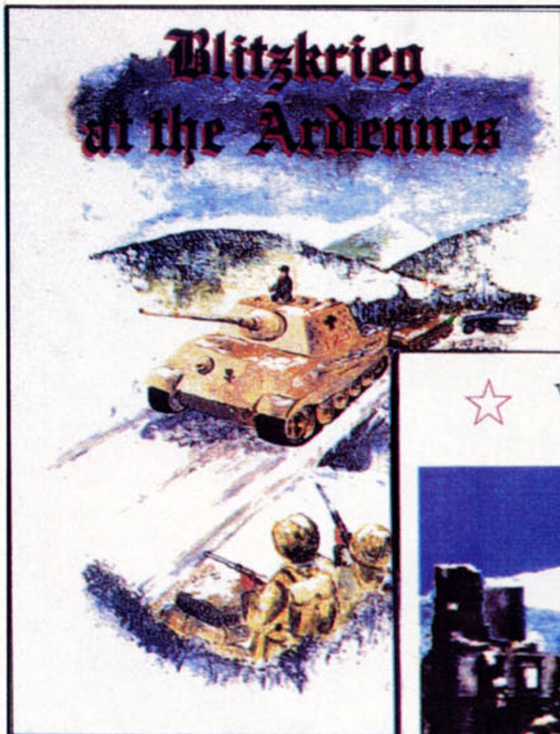
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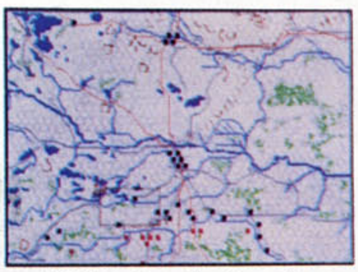
White Death





Suez '73

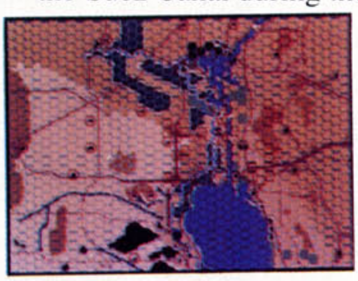
Strategic Maps





White Death: Russian counter attack Nov '42 Mission: Retake the vital Leningrad Railroad. Encircle and destroy German Units in the heavily fortified city of Velikiye Luki.

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Re-Sounding ... Computers

(Continued from page 61)

Each board offers plenty of benefits for the price but each also has enough liabilities to suggest why one may want to consider one of the other options. At the very least, this author firmly believes that anyone who *does* purchase a sound board should obtain nothing less than an **AdLib** board.

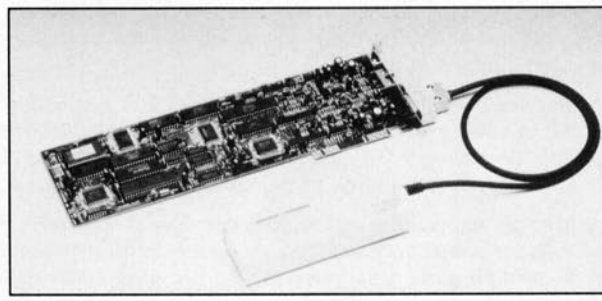
To date, AdLib has sold over 100,000 boards and employs the FM technology that is the overwhelming standard used today. The quality is such that the buyer invariably asks himself why he hadn't bought one sooner. Add to this the AdLib's comparatively low price and you have reason enough to buy one.

The **Roland LAPC-1** provides, without a doubt, the highest quality sound available on a PC today. Everyone who hears it wants one, *badly*. It doesn't hurt that the MIDI standard is so prevalent in the music industry that you can expect it to migrate to the gaming environment at any time. Roland makes it very difficult to look elsewhere, but a few shortcomings may make it a necessity. The LAPC-1 supports only music or sound effects based on music instruments. It also costs more than one might wish to pay. For these reasons, it is recommended only to those who either want to play *serious* music with their PCs, or for those people who like to have the biggest and best of everything (no matter what it costs).

The **Creative Labs** folks have worked very hard to make the *Sound Blaster* a standard. Currently, there are over 70,000 buyers and current trends indicate that the Sound Blaster could possibly surpass AdLib in sales by Christmas. While costing a bit more than an AdLib card, it also provides more. When one takes into account the free game port, text-to-speech capability, true digitized sounds, MIDI compatibility, and more included software, Sound Blaster an excellent value.

The Best Of All Possible Worlds . . .

What does all of this information mean to the consumer? One can only be assured that as larger developers continue to push multimedia technology forward, superior PC sound support will become even more commonplace than it is today. If one hasn't heard what a PC can truly sound like, now is the time to listen and buy. **CGW**



Roland LAPC-1

« Circle Reader Service #26

Circle Reader Service #59

Scorpion's View

(Continued from page 66)

game in some instances) if he doesn't have the right item(s) with him to solve a particular puzzle.

Worlds of Fears (Game Play)

All right, that takes care of the mechanics. Now let's talk about the main event, the game itself. First, this is not a jaunt for beginners. *Altered Destiny* is definitely aimed at the mid-level and up of adventuring. So, you can expect to put in a fair amount of time on this one.

The plot is fairly straightforward: it's the old chestnut of saving the universe. This time around, we have the twin brothers Jonquah and Helmar, as well as the Jewel of Light. Despite its name, the Jewel is a corrupting influence and Helmar has succumbed to it (sounds vaguely reminiscent of the shards in *Ultima V*). His use of the Jewel will eventually destroy everything, unless he is stopped in time.

Jonquah has been imprisoned by his brother, but has enough power left to call for a hero. Who he actually gets is P.J. Barrett, Yuppie middle-manager. There's no time to look for anyone else, so it's up to P.J. to put an end to Helmar's nefarious doings.

As you might expect, the action does not take place on Earth, but on another planet called Daltere. It's a typical Berlyn world: weird. There's no other description for a place where information falls from the skies in little pieces, trees grow with roots up instead of down, and islands float in the air, anchored by a complex vine system . . . and that's just the start.

Weird critters abound, too, and you can speak to most of them. Well, some of them. Basically, there are three types of beings here: the intelligent ones, like Lantra, who are helpful in one way or another; non-intelligent hostile types, like the clamchops (cross a clam with "Jaws" and that's what you get); and the non-intelligent "window-dressing" creatures, such as quirls and fluboxes, who are around to emphasize this isn't home.

It's pretty obvious this isn't home when, after his initial chat with Jonquah, P.J. finds himself on the floating island. Naturally, the first thing P.J. does is walk around and talk to everyone he can. Let me insert a warning here to "*Save Often*." It is, alas, all too easy to die in this game. One wrong step and P.J. will find himself falling into eternity or some equally final situation. It's going to happen sooner or later (and possibly many times). So, use that save game function.

Up here, P.J. will meet Alnar, Tentro, and Vindah. Actually, Vindah isn't on the main island, but a small one nearby. P.J. will have to figure out a way to get over there, but it's really not hard. Along the way, naturally, anything that's not nailed down should be picked up for future use.

Once P.J. has spoken to the three beings on the island, it's time to find transportation to the surface (think small). He arrives at a crossroads and much of the game will be taken up with solving puzzles around this area. Four paths lead off to the north (a nasty canyon), west (Weird Woods), south (Order of the Jewel), and east (Forest of Dreams).

The Order of the Jewel is a good place to start. We'll hope P.J. has brought his invitations (can't get in without 'em). This area is home to Lantra (caretaker of the crystal garden) and Master Towhee (caretaker of scrolls). Let me save you some time by saying that you can't get past any of the locked doors, so leave them be. Lantra and Towhee are all you need to worry about here; both will provide important items, under suitable circumstances.

A stroll over to the Weird Woods shows this place is aptly named, being filled with all manner of strange vegetation. If P.J. looks up, he'll see there's another area above him, which he'll have to reach somehow. Further along in the woods is the Pool of Light, guarded by a mean critter called the aRRaRRa. P.J is going to have to fight it, although right now is not the best time.

I had some trouble here, since I used keyboard input such as "fight aRRaRRa" and "hit aRRaRRa with sword", none of which worked. P.J. has to be maneuvered physically with arrow keys or mouse to combat the creature. Keep that in mind for when he's ready for the confrontation.

The Canyon of Fears is an exercise in aggravation. P.J. has to walk through several screens of long, narrow pathways suspended over the ground. One misstep (and they're easy to make!) and it's time for a restore. Saving often is an absolute necessity here.

These pathways lead to the Yula graveyard, where an important item must be obtained. P.J. can get it by doing the obvious thing, but *only* when standing in exactly the right spot. Move around and keep trying from different locations.

The Forest of Dreams is an odd place. In fact, it's really two places. P.J. will have to figure out how to get from one to the other. Just remember that both are real and he can die in either of them, if he isn't careful. This is especially true when walking past pits of acid.

Eventually, the time will come when P.J. is ready (we hope) to take on Helmar. This requires travelling across the Howler Lake (bring everything that hasn't been used yet). P.J. should not attempt the trip until he has solved all the puzzles to this point.

The island on which Helmar's castle sits is populated by bizarre and hostile types of mutated plants. There are several at the dock where P.J. lands, and he hasn't much time to figure out what to do about them (saving upon arrival is a good idea). Fortunately, his inventory by now should be smaller, and trial and error, if nothing else, will provide the solution.

A careful tour of the pathways will bring P.J. to the castle door. Inside is a sort of elevator that will take him up (with a little effort) to the crystal maze. Walking around at random won't do much good here, as P.J. will need a little divine assistance to find his way through to Helmar.

The final confrontation goes pretty quickly, one way or another. P.J. gets his choice of weapons and the correct one to pick is rather obvious, if you think about what Helmar will be using. After that, the rest is pretty much automatic and a bit flat. There's no special graphic when P.J. defeats Helmar, and Helmar's abrupt return to goodness (without the least bit of struggle) when Jonquah appears is a little too *deus ex machina* to be satisfactory.

Proffered Destiny (Conclusions)

In spite of the problems mentioned above, this is still a game worth playing, especially if you've had your fill of the easy adventures that glutted the market over the summer. The vision of a bizarre and alien environment is well-realized, the puzzles (most of them, anyway) are tough but fair, and there are some interesting touches of humor here and there throughout the game.

That's about it for this look into the crystal ball. **CGW**

Lands and Legends

TurboGrafx 16's Ys I & II

by Roe R. Adams, III



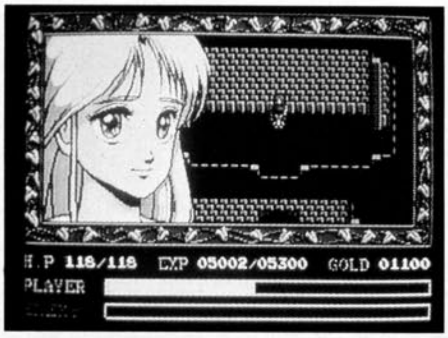
The hottest advance in gaming this year has been the debut of programs on CD-ROM disks from Japan. This technology promises to open new vistas for the computer role-playing game (CRPG) player, as programming space opens up to an incredible 54 megabytes with full audio/voice channeling. So far, only a couple of the many CD-ROM games which are currently available in Japan have crossed the Pacific. Most of those, however, were merely straightforward ports. The latest CD-ROM from **NEC** for their *TurboGrafx-16* game machine is *Ys I & II*. *Ys* is the first CD-ROM available here to actually show off the new capabilities of the technology.

The *Ys* series (pronounced "EASE") has been a big hit for five years in Japan. The first game in the series, *Ancient Ys Vanished*, was released in 1985 in Japan on the NEC 9800 computer system. *Ys IV* will be released in about six months. The capacity of **NEC**'s CD-ROM disk is so large that it contains both of the first two scenarios uncut. For this effort, one of Japan's top new programmers, Hiromasa Iwasaki, did an amazing job of plastic surgery on the scenarios. While the storyline is completely unchanged, Mr. Iwasaki and a team of artists totally revamped the graphics and added orchestral sound.

Ys was the first Japanese game system to emulate the famous **Sierra** *King's Quest* graphics look. In the last five years, however, graphic concepts have evolved considerably. Drawing heavily upon the Japanese style of animation known as "anime," a new ten-minute background sequence has been added at the beginning of the game. Spectacular scenes scroll by on the screen to a lush background of music, while a narrator (heard in real voice, not digitized!) tells of the history of *Ys*. This is a terrific opening to show one's friends (or wife) *why* all that money was spent to get the CD-ROM add-on for the TurboGrafx. Also, at key junctures in the game, special new anime sequences highlight the action. The gaming landscapes and buildings of *Ys* have really been brought to a vivid level and the graphic pictures of people talking have been considerably enhanced.

The story revolves around an ancient tragedy. Seven hundred years ago, the land of *Ys* was created by two beautiful goddesses. For many generations, the land prospered and a golden age existed. Then, one day, six wise priests tried to make a magical metal (called Cleria) out of Light. Unfortunately, in the process of making Cleria, part of the Light was reflected. This reflection of Light created an evil darkness named Darm who rampaged through *Ys*, destroying all the culture and the cities. After much havoc, the six priests managed to use all the power of their magic to escape from Darm's reach. The solution was a trifle

Special Bonus Section
Cartridge Game Coverage



drastic, but then such is the stuff of legends. They floated the land of *Ys* up into the sky to contain Darm, while they remained on the ground! The chronicles of these events were written down by each priest. Then, they hid these six books away in secret places so that no one would be tempted to duplicate the experiment.

700 years later, Adol, our hero, comes across the water to the land of Esteria, where he is hailed (much to his surprise) by a seeress as the fulfillment of legend. She is even waiting on the pier when the boat lands. Now there is an accurate foretelling! Adol's quest is to discover what happen to the ancient vanished land of *Ys*. Toward that end, he must seek out and recover the six legendary books of *Ys*.

The town, in which Adol begins his adventure, is full of trouble from kidnapped relatives to a missing silver harmonica, all which need various kinds of help. Solving each of these mini-quests furthers Adol along the path to the first book.

His initial obstacle is to become strong enough to survive outside town. In the beginning, Adol can only afford to buy is a simple sword and basic armor. Even a wooden shield is beyond his purse's budget. Be sure to save the game frequently throughout the adventures, not just in the beginning. It is *very* easy to die in *Ys*, because the monsters actually pursue the player, homing in on him and attacking.

Besides the usual choices of swords, armor and shields, Adol may also acquire four special rings: a power-ring, a ring-mail, a timer-ring, and a heal-ring. The timer ring slows down the monster movements on the screen, which can be critical to avoid encounters with powerful roaming creatures. An ornate Mirror affords escapes from combat while a Wing provides a handy teleport back to town. Arms, weapons, and items are all portrayed on the inventory screen by well-drawn icons. Highlighting the choice equips or uses the selection.

Once Adol advances a few levels and can afford better armor, he may safely cross the bridge into the main part of the game. Due east, there is another village which will yield valuable clues, add yet more quests, and point Adol up the hill to an ancient temple. Statues of the two ancient goddesses mark the way within the temple. One statue will even teleport the player into the labyrinth beneath the building. Many of the initial quests will be solved within the confines of the temple. Wearing a special Mask is needed to find a secret passage within the temple's lowest level.

The next phase of Adol's adventure leads him into a deep cavern complex, where he is immediately attacked by some things that look like rabid raspberries. Ghosts and dark knights also wander here, so make sure that Adol is ready for all this fun! A unique feature of the caverns is the way light is handled in the game. Instead of just illuminating everything, the game only puts a globe of light around Adol. Everything else is murky darkness. This makes for thrills-a-minute as walking around a bend in the corridor usually puts Adol right into the arms of a monster the player couldn't see until then!

Brushing the cavern dust from his armor, Adol now stares up at a *very* tall tower. Here is where the rest of his adventures will occur until he finally defeats the end guardian and retrieves the sixth book. In fact, when any of the major guardian monsters are activated in the game, a player will only be able to defeat it *if* Adol's level is high enough and he has the best weapon/armor available at the time. No lucky shots or clever strategies work in these situations. Getting wasted by guardians becomes a very common affair if a player is good and starts romping through the scenario ahead of Adol's development. The ending, though, is another fine anime sequence that will delight the player.

Ys II, The Flying Ancient Land of Ys, begins with Adol arriving in the aerial city, guided by the information in the six books. His quest is to somehow defeat Darm and return *Ys* back to the planet. Along the way, he must rescue Lilia, who is held captive by Darm.

The first segment on the surface ends with Adol's defeating a giant demon. This gains him entrance into the Ice Park. Here, various items must be discovered and then used in a certain position for Adol to proceed. This is the first real adventure gaming aspect of the *Ys* series.

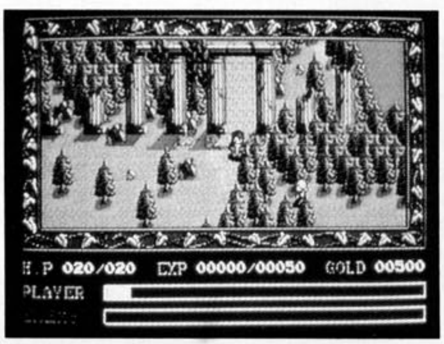
To exit from the Ice Park, Adol must defeat an even bigger demon. Now he enters the Burn Land, which is full of *extremely* horrible monsters. There, he must find the legendary Duck Demons (no doubt a Disney spinoff!) and rescue a kidnapped boy named Tarf. Not too surprisingly, another huge demon blocks Adol's exit from this horrible land.

Ahead lies the Solomon Shrine where Darm awaits. The Evil One has prepared an especially nasty surprise for our hero. Lilia is to be sacrificed upon the twelfth stroke of the giant temple bell at the top of the pyramid! As Adol fights his way upward through the maze levels, the player periodically hears the bell deeply toll yet another stroke. It is a very clever artifice to engender suspense and heightens the player's sense of urgency. Finishing off Darm and landing *Ys* yields another fine anime ending, even better then the closing sequence of *Ys I*.

All games have a down side, and *Ys*' Achilles heel is its combat system. Here, *Ys* really shows its age and its evolutionary arcade roots. To engage in combat, all that has to happen is for Adol to literally run into a monster. As long as the two figures are touching, there is combat until one dies. This form of combat might be humorously referred to as the "bump-and-grind" school of fighting, but alas, it is rather boring by today's standards.

The game play is the same for both games, but *Ys II* has a much enriched graphic look. Parts of the land look like giant interconnected wooden puzzle pieces viewed at a slight angle from "top down." This creates a wonderful three-dimensionality to the landscape. Again, lush music orchestration accompanies our hero throughout his trials, and sweeps him toward victory. Ah, but is victory complete? Stay tuned for *Ys III, Wanders from Ys*, for the answer to that question.

NEC has not set a firm date yet for its debut on CD-ROM in the US, but look toward next summer for its release.



Nintendo Unleashes the *Final Fantasy* (Part I)

by Roe R. Adams, III

A title such as *Final Fantasy* had best not be the label for a penultimate fantasy game, lest it be scoffed at for pretentiousness. Rejoice, then, for the happy news is that (at least for the time and in the place where it was created), *Final Fantasy* did, indeed, deliver the goods and thus, in its day, was aptly named. The bad news, however, is that its "day" was five years ago and its birthplace Japan. While current Japanese role-playing games have matured greatly since then, five years ago they were merely imitative clones, lagging somewhat behind U.S. game development levels. Therefore, if one can accept that *Final Fantasy* for the Nintendo is a game in the tradition of *Ultima III*, it will be much easier to relax and enjoy it.

As with many role-playing games, one must first generate a team which consists of four members. Character class choices include: Fighter, Black Belt, Thief, White Mage, Black Mage, plus an unusual addition entitled Red Mage. Players must carefully consider the subtle pros and cons of each class carefully, for they have some unusual twists. Naturally, characters begin as entry level in their class and, at

a special point in the game, each character gains maturity and is thus elevated to a higher level within their class. To wit, Fighters become Knights, Mages become Wizards, Black Belts become Masters and so on. Those with long memories might recall the original *Wizardry* where changing Thieves into Ninjas was quite a breakthrough.

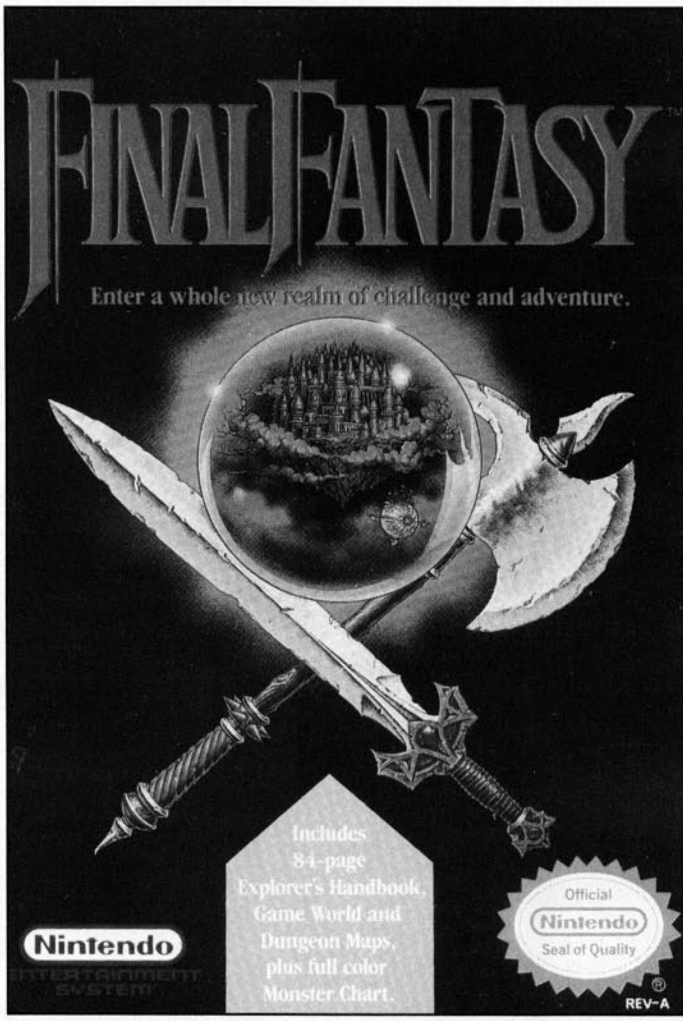
Ninjas are incredibly powerful, but Thieves have only one real function in the game—making it easier for the party to *run away* from combat. (There is nothing to steal in *Final Fantasy* and Thieves make very poor fighters). Unfortunately, to acquire a Ninja, one must be willing to lug a useless Thief around for half the game!

For the meticulous planners out there who just can't make up their minds whether to hire a second White or Black Mage for the party, the Red Mage class might be considered. These hybrid Mages learn a few spells on each level from *both* the White and the Black spell list. Red Mages can also wear heavier armor and wield better weapons than normal Mages (shades of an *AD&D* multi-class character). The problem is that with a maximum four-member group, what team can afford a character who is not some sort of specialist?

[Editor's Note — Roe's recommended team structure for maximum efficiency: Two Fighters, one White Mage, and one Black Mage.]

The story opens with one's faithful party of adventurers in the Castle Coneria, with the king awaiting them on the second floor. He identifies the adventuring party as the much touted (if novice) "Light Warriors," and asks their aid in rescuing his daughter, the Princess Sara. She has been kidnapped by the evil Garland (a typical role-playing UBG—Ultimate Bad Guy) and held hostage in the nearby Temple of Fiends.

Outside the castle is the town of Coneria wherein the usual (almost generic) assortment of RPG shops are there to help outfit one's team. One oddity is that individual magic spells must be *purchased* (per use) and they are quite pricey. While a resurrect spell is inexpensive when compared to other FRP games, *Final Fantasy* presents the "taxing" problem of charging for saving the game at the Inn! (No gold, no hold). Another indicator of the game's age can be found in the Potion Shop. While a team can carry up to 99 heal potions (which *are* needed for long sessions), the game simplemindedly requires that each potion be purchased laboriously one at a time. (This means going through the 3-step purchase procedure 99 times at the beginning of each foray! No new game would needlessly bore a player so badly.)



Once outfitted, there are no story-enhancing (or distracting, depending on one's point of view) side adventures, as the team must proceed directly to the Temple of Fiends to rescue the Princess Sara, their first great test. Contrary to all the dire warnings, a team of lower level characters *can* easily defeat Garland. One nice touch, in an attempt to alleviate anti-climax, is that upon freeing Sara, the team is teleported back to the Castle. After defeating a greater monster, the party is whisked out of the dungeon and back to the surface, thus eliminating the excruciating treks of retracing one's path. This helpful feature is used throughout the game.

After returning, the now joyful king commemorates the return of his daughter by building a bridge linking his island to the mainland, beginning the game in earnest. A series of interlocking quests enable the team to awaken the spell-ensorcelled Elven Prince who becomes a powerful ally. To do this, one must first travel across land to the town of Pravoka and defeat a pirate crew in order to gain control of their ship. On a water world full of islands, a ship is unimaginably useful. The party will have to visit the witch Matoya and discover what she seeks, paying close attention to a backward-talking broom in Matoya's Cave for the vital secret of how to access a world map of the outdoors. Further itinerary highlights include: the Dwarf Cave, the eerie Northwest Castle (full of Undead), the Marsh Cave, and the Titan's tunnel. If the party is strong enough, they will reach the Seer Sarda's cave, wherein lies the item necessary to complete the Witch's quest.

On these journeys, the player learns that the four elementals (Earth, Fire, Water, and Air) are busy destroying the world. One's party must, therefore, track down each elemental fiend in its lair and defeat it. An important task is to find the hidden circle of Sages in the town of Crescent Lake, for they offer many clues and a special item.

A recent game machine trend is to include extensive hint (well, solution, really) books with their games. **Nintendo** has gone one very welcome step further, however. While this reviewer normally feels that these books are extremely detrimental to people learning how to play an RPG (because everything is laid out for them by the numbers), *Final Fantasy* offers an outstanding tutorial for new players. This tutorial takes great pains to offer *choices* to the player and explain *why* certain options

(Continued on page 100)

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Q: IN POPULOUS,™ WHICH DISASTER *CAN'T* YOU UNLEASH:

A. Catastrophic earthquakes
B. Erupting volcanoes
C. Whopping great cataclysmic floods
D. Oozing, pestilential swamps
E. World-wide acne epidemic



G.A.T. QUESTION #2

Q: BUDOKAN THE MARTIAL SPIRIT™ FEATURES KARATE, BO, NUNCHAKU, AND KENDO. EACH MARTIAL ART HAS OVER ___ UNIQUE MOVES:

A. 10
B. $E = mc^2$
C. 16
D. π
E. 25



G.A.T. QUESTION #3



Q: IN JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL,™ THE ONLY THING YOU *CAN'T* MAKE YOUR PLAYERS DO IS:

A. Call 100 different pro plays from John Madden's playbook
B. Hit hard, hit often, hit mean
C. Sell popcorn at the game
D. Dive, spin, jump, break tackles, and call audibles
E. Tough it out in the mud or snow to win Super Sunday



G.A.T. QUESTION #4

Q: IN LAKERS VS. CELTICS AND THE NBA® PLAYOFFS,™ YOU CAN MASTER:

A. Michael Jordan's awesome air reverse slam
B. Charles Barkley's monstrous gorilla dunk
C. Isiah Thomas' slashing drive and finger-roll
D. Clyde the Glide's ferocious tomahawk jam
E. All of the above



G.A.T. QUESTION #5

Q: THE ___ IS THE CENTRAL WEAPON IN SWORD OF SODAN™:

A. Enchanted sword
B. Killer parakeet
C. Industrial strength chainsaw
D. Small to medium-sized thermonuclear device
E. Rubber chicken



G.A.T. QUESTION #6

Q: BATTLE SQUADRON™ IS:

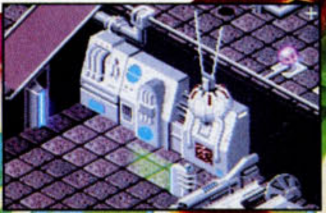
A. An underwater chess game requiring wit and a large lung capacity
B. Two Sopwith Camels and a Messerschmidt fighting a horde of locusts
C. A World War II simulation with genuine film footage
D. A rapid-fire space combat game with bodacious graphics
E. None of the above



G.A.T. QUESTION #7

Q: IN ZANY GOLF,™ PLAYERS OVERCOME OBSTACLES LIKE:

A. Land mines, hot dogs, and swamp shrews
B. Lasers, hamburgers, and moving holes
C. Gravity, relativity, and math anxiety
D. Terrorists, aliens, and dingo smugglers
E. Adolescence, socialization, and genetic inheritance



Nintendo Unleashes the *Final Fantasy* (Part I)

(Continued from page 96)

will be better than others. Within the 80-page manual is a wealth of playing *style* tips and gaming perspective that is rare, indeed. Also included in the package are two large foldout sheets containing a world map with notations for various localities; a series of maps to the major dungeons; useful weapon, armor, and spell charts; and an incredible monster table. This monster chart gives every stat on each monster, even going so far as to discuss its weak points and immunities!

Nintendo has shown great restraint, however, in stopping the walkthrough at the game's halfway point. At this juncture, the player has defeated both the Earth and Fire Elementals and has uncovered the airship which will take the team to the Northern continent. The world map does contain location pointers for this continent which, by being numbered, suggests an order of visiting. Yet the hint book pats the player on the back, says "nice job so far," wishes him good luck, and then boots him out into the game on his own. What a very nice touch! *Final Fantasy* is one game that strives to educate players without totally insulting their intelligence.

The final dungeon is several orders of magnitude more difficult than the rest of the game. Finishing will be quite a challenge, even to veteran players, so be prepared for many attempts. The best approach is to explore small chunks at a time and use the *exit* spell to escape, thus allowing the party to recharge and heal. Even 99 Heal potions vaporize like water on a hot griddle in the final dungeon. One feature that is rarely needed throughout the rest of the game, but is extremely valuable for the end game, are the portable SAVE GAME items. The player may purchase or find Tents, Cabins, and Houses, all of which allow the player to save the game in the wilderness (but not underground). The Tent only saves the game status, while a Cabin will partially heal the team, and Houses not only heal, but restore magical strength of characters to their maximum. (The wild concept of an adventure team carrying around inflatable houses does not seem to bother the Japanese!)

As a special treat for the players, there is an Easter Egg (a hidden section) buried in Final Fantasy. To access a totally different mini-game "on the side," press the A and B buttons together 55 (yes, fifty-five) times while the party is sailing the ship on the water. Voila!

The *Final Fantasy* series is highly popular in Japan, as this reviewer can personally attest to. In Tokyo, a shop exists solely for *Final Fantasy* merchandising of T-shirts, mugs, posters, and notebooks. They even had CD records of the game sound tracks! The Japanese take their gaming seriously. In the U.S., only Disney characters rate their own exclusive shop.

Players who enjoyed *Final Fantasy* and wish for a sequel will not have to wait long. *Final Fantasy IV* was released in Japan this year. So, look for the second scenario of this series to debut in the U.S. in about six months. Although it is somewhat dated, put *Final Fantasy* high on your list of games to recommend to people who have no idea what a CRPG is or how to play one.

CGW

Circle Reader Service #67 »

Small-Unit Action, Up Close and Personal

A Review Of D.R.A.G.O.N. Force

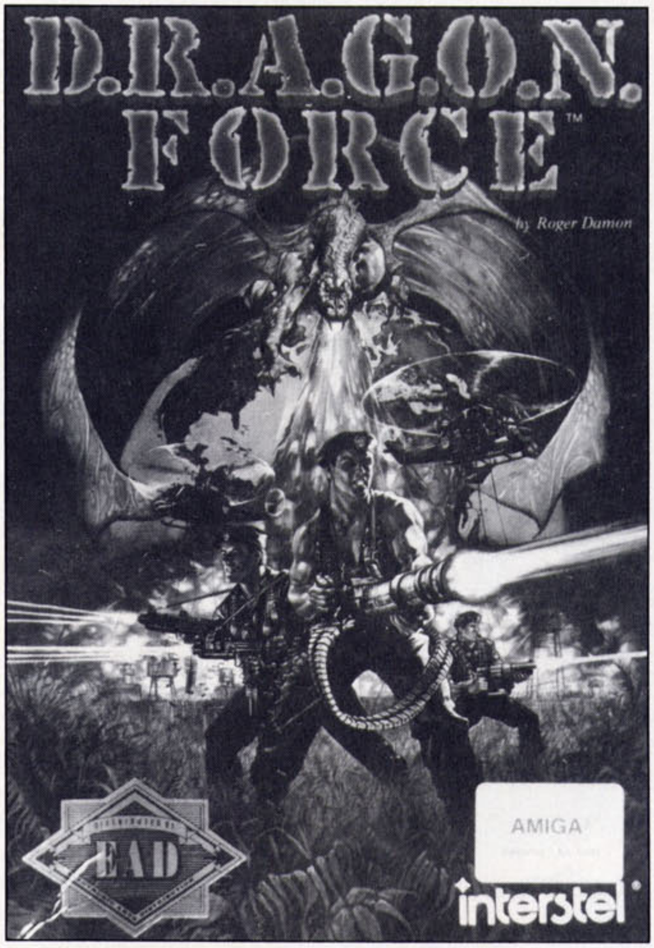
by Jesse W. Cheng

HQ told us this mission would be a routine sweep of another South America cocaine cartel lab in the bush. Sure, routine . . . Until Private Burbick got cut down by a burst of automatic fire. Second Lieutenant Mergen got us into some brush for cover. As luck would have it, the cover ran us right into a terrorist sniper. Greaser's M60 machine gun spat at the sniper and he was history. Not, however, before Mergen got his thick skull dented. He's still conscious, but pretty foggy right now.

Seems the only problem we've got left is the rumbling coming towards us from the dirt road out of the jungle. Maybe it's an Abrams from heaven come to rescue us? Sure. Maybe the moon will fall out of the sky.

"Heads!" hollered Piper. "T-72 with support!"

Sergeant Johnston grabbed his LAW rocket, steadied it on his shoulder, grinned and fired. Hiss. Boom. Scratch one red tank! Before Johnston's grin could turn into a satisfied smile, though, another tank popped out of nowhere. Then another, and another. Routine mission, eh? I think I'll save my last clip for the boys back at HQ.



Title:	D.R.A.G.O.N. Force
Systems:	Amiga, IBM
Price:	$49.95
Designers:	Roger Damon & Arlon Harris
Distributor:	Electronic Arts Distribution
Publisher:	Interstel Webster, TX

A Wargame In "Dragon's" Clothing

D.R.A.G.O.N. Force (Drastic Response Assault Ground Operations Network) is **Interstel**'s latest strategy game of contemporary commando combat. *D.R.A.G.O.N. Force* is a solitaire game where the player assumes command of a squad of men and moves them, one at a time, into combat to overcome computer-controlled terrorists in over a dozen missions. While an initial glance might lead one to compare this game to *Omnitrend*'s *Breach* series (except for the time period), the play is really quite different. Wargamers will want to take a careful look at this game, as it plays similarly to such boardgames as **SPI**'s *Sniper* or **Avalon Hill**'s *Firepower*, but without the tedious paperwork.

Squads With Character(s)

Each mission starts out with an objective running the gamut of rescuing hostages and eliminating terrorists to raiding cocaine labs and recovering captured teammates. After a briefing, the player forms a commando unit from a roster of 14 specialized elite soldiers. Selection is limited to seven men per mission, so one must choose the squad carefully for the task at hand. A dossier is available on each man, rating him for close combat, demolition, sharpshooting, anti-tank (the ability to fire a bazooka or missile), machine gunnery, scouting (ability to spot hidden enemy units and hostages), and medicine (healing other's wounds). In addition to the specialty skills, men are rated on the basis of six attributes: awareness, intensity, guts, vitality, strength and luck. Some of these attributes will improve from mission to mission as squad members become battle-hardened. When playing, no character actually represents *the player*.

Open Arms

Once a commando team is chosen, the next step is to equip it. The arsenal is quite impressive, listing each weapon's make, manufacturer, description, ammunition loadout, range, hit chance, and suppression effects. Smallarms range from assault rifles (US M16A2, Soviet AK47s or the Belgium FN-FAL) to submachine guns (UZIs and German MP5s). Long-range sniper rifles, LAWs, grenade launchers, heavy and light machine guns and even crossbows are available (to name a few!).

Mission Maneuvering

The team then embarks on its mission, mindful of its objec-

Return To A World of Loyalty and Honor



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Opening Screen



Making an Alliance



Battlefield

Misplaced loyalties in the feudal era of Japan often proved fatal. The mighty Japanese hero Oda Nobunaga sought an end to generations of bloody conflict between the warring states of his country. Tragically, his dream of unifying Japan ended when he was betrayed and murdered by his own general. It's your turn now to become a 16th century warlord and fulfill Nobunaga's ambition!

Command over 400 distinct Samurai characters - each with separate personalities and goals. A Samurai will pledge his sword and honor to your cause, but can he be trusted?

Enhanced battle scenarios include Siege warfare, where you must storm the castle gates, swim the moat or scale the castle walls. In Field warfare, the tactics are Charge, Ambush and Surprise. You can even catch the enemy off guard by a night attack!

If your character falls in battle, the war continues with your chosen successor. With strikingly detailed graphics, this simulation of Japan's Civil War Era is more realistic than ever before!

- Two scenarios, five levels of difficulty.
- Up to 4 Daimyos (warlords) allow for simultaneous play.
- A full map plus 3 regional maps.
- Interact with over 400 Samurai characters.
- New HEX battle features of Night and Siege warfare.
- Not copy protected.



Bandit Kings of Ancient China - The evil minister Gao Qiu has usurped the command from the throne. The righteous followers of the emperor have been exiled as outlaws. Join these heroic rebels in your mission to overthrow a wicked empire, and restore the might to the throne. *Available for NES, PC and Amiga.*



Romance of the Three Kingdoms - As a Warlord of the 2nd century China, you must restore a shattered Empire. Gather the bravest warriors of the land to build up your armies. Use strength and strategy to destroy your enemies and claim the power to govern all of China. *Available for NES, PC and Amiga.*



Genghis Khan - Become the greatest warrior the world has known. Through battles and allegiances, forge the mighty Mongol Horde. With armies at your command, the empires of the world are tempting targets. Fight bravely to achieve the ultimate goal of world conquest. *Available for NES, PC and Amiga.*

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Questions:

1) Genghis Khan's greatest claim to fame was?
(a) a quick temper (b) the hit single "I feel for you!" (c) a bad smell (d) carving out an empire stretching from China to Europe in the 12th century

2) What famous gang defeated the evil minister Gao Qiu and restored peace to the Song Empire?
(a) Hole in the Wall Gang (b) Bandit Kings of Ancient China (c) Gang of Four

3) What was the epic describing the power struggle at the end of China's second Han Dynasty called?
(a) Romance of the Three Kingdoms (b) I Ching (c) Godzilla

4) Who terrorized and almost succeeded in unifying Japan in the 16th Century?
(a) Cowabunga (b) Nobunaga Oda (c) Godzilla

5) What type of game does KOEI make?
(a) simulation (b) historical (c) educational (d) entertaining (e) all of the above (f) none of the above

6) "KOEI, We __________ the past, you make the __________ !"
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Every month (November 1990-February 1991) 40 winners will be randomly drawn from all entries having the correct answers. These winners will receive a KOEI Game Player's T-shirt (approx. retail value $12). After all entries are received (postmarked no later than February 15) 50 more prizes will be awarded to winners randomly drawn from all entries having the correct answers. These winners will receive a KOEI Game, choice of title (approx. retail value $65). One grand prize winner will be chosen and awarded Sony's HandiCam (approx. retail value $1,000). Odds of winning depend on number of vaild entries received. Judges decision is final. Not responsible for lost, late or misdirected, incomplete or illegible entries. Winners will be notified by mail. Total approximate retail value of all prizes $5,000. Sweepstakes open to U.S. residents except employees and families of KOEI Corporation, Ltd. All prizes will be awarded. Limit one prize per household/family. No substitutions or cash equivalents. Taxes, if any, are the responsibility of winners. Sweepstakes void where prohibited, taxed or restricted. Winners agree to the use of their names and likenesses for publicity and advertising purposes without additional compensation or permission. (For winners list, send a SASE to same address. Available after March 1, 1991.)

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tives. The strategic map is displayed, showing the entire area of the conflict. There is a nice zoom feature on the tactical display, which is where most game play takes place.

In the tactical display, there is an information screen to the right showing the selected soldier and his attributes, weapons carried, health, and moves remaining. Actions are entered via keyboard or mouse. While the graphics are better than average for the IBM version (supporting VGA down to monochrome), the Amiga version is really no better than the IBM's VGA version, but the Amiga's sound is far superior, the IBM version using only the computer's internal speaker for sound support.

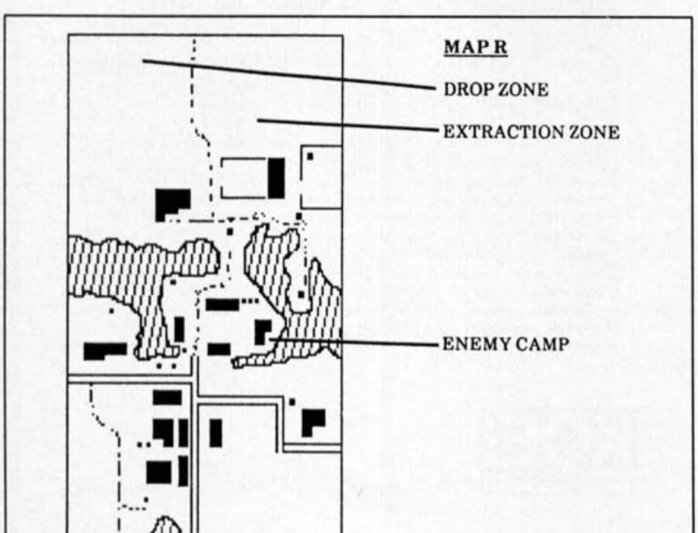
The real strength of *D.R.A.G.O.N. Force* resides in its simultaneous movement and fire control. In contrast to *Breach 2* where all movement is sequential, in *D.R.A.G.O.N. Force* all movement and combat is simultaneous through preplotted trace lines entered into the computer. In general, all instructions to the troops are given though orders, which each order taking one impulse. One can give any combination of movement or fire orders not to exceed five per turn (which is one minute of real time).

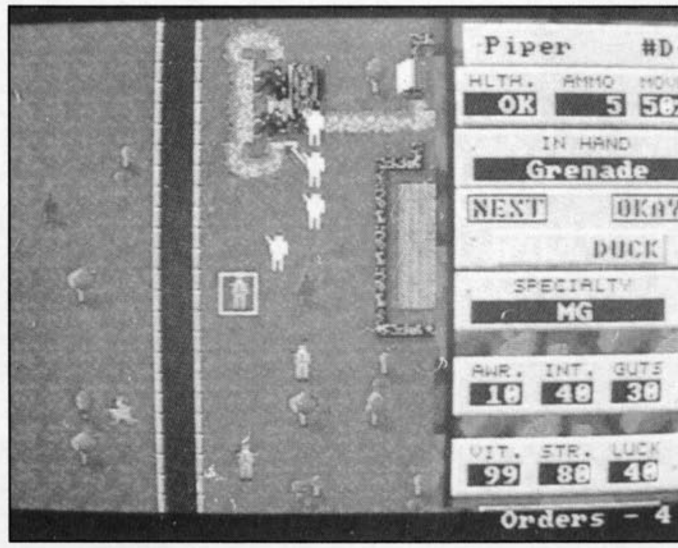
Movement is entered via an icon-driven base through the keyboard arrow keys or by a mouse. The mouse interface is a bit cumbersome since one cannot directly click and drag each soldier to move, but must go through a rather tedious set of icons. For example, to move a man one must first click on the soldier in question to "select" him, then click on the "OK" button to confirm the selection, then select "MOVE TO" which will bring up a cross-hair cursor, which must be centered on the destination square and clicked.

Other movement options include moving each soldier one square at a time, doubletime and crawl movement, stand or duck, and wait (used by medics to stay with someone they are healing). After all the men in the squad have had their orders entered, the computer resolves all movement and fire, for both sides, simultaneously. Each impulse is played out a step at a time, so it is easy to watch the action develop. The computer can be set to run indefinitely until you decide to stop the action from the mouse or keyboard, or until someone fires.

The Whites Of Their Pixels

There are three types of fire missions in *D.R.A.G.O.N. Force*. By "firing at will," the soldier uses a sort of opportunity fire, choosing the most threatening enemy to shoot at (usually the





closest). The "fire at spot" order is not for shooting dogs, but good for hitting suspected enemy positions or as overwatch fire to cover one's troop movements. Finally, the old standby "fire at unit" order means exactly what it says.

Gunfire is represented by dotted white lines emanating from guns and white splashes when they hit something. Gunfire can cause a man to be wounded, killed or suppressed (pinned). Because of the suppression possibility, the game can sometimes bog down when everyone starts exchanging fire as men become pinned. The game also gets tedious when one has to individually move all their men to the "extraction zone" after a mission is accomplished.

After a mission is completed, the element of surprise is lost when replayed, so the trick is to do it right the first time. It is disappointing that *D.R.A.G.O.N. Force* doesn't include a scenario builder, as many tools seemed to be provided for just such a feature.

Hills And Valleys

Terrain plays an important role in the game. There are four levels of terrain, with level one being "ground" level, up through two hill levels to level four, the "tower" level. Terrain types include trees, hedges, walls, buildings, slopes, flats, grass, roads, huts, etc. Although movement doesn't appear to be effected by terrain, defensive cover and tracing line of sight *is*. Hiding behind slopes, trees, walls, etc. will lessen the chance of being hit by enemy fire or being seen by the enemy. Also, shooting down a hill from a tower improves a unit's field of view considerably (giving new meaning to the cliche "put a man in the church tower").

Parting Shots And Future Missions

In summary, there is a nice flavor to the game, as one really feels like he or she is in the middle of a firefight with all the chaos and confusion. One will see certain commandos pressing on under withering fire while others may hug the earth in panic. Despite the game's weaknesses of not having a scenario builder and mild interface problems, this game would be a worthy addition to any wargame aficionado's collection. *Interstel* plans a release of a version 2.0 early in 1991 which will include a scenario builder, AdLib support for the IBM and additional mission disks. **CGW**

Circle Reader Service #44 »

GEN CON '90



MilAtari's fifty Atari STs with two MIDI Maze games going on in the background.

A Pilgrimage to MECCA

by Dale Roethig



All of MACE's 28 Amigas and 14 C-64s busy on Sunday morning. Tetris finals being played out in the foreground.

Every August the pilgrims come to MECCA for GEN CON. This year, 11,500 gamers filled Milwaukee's huge MECCA convention center, each seeking their own paradise (or pair of dice, as the case may be). Some ventured into the pen-and-paper role-playing tournaments; others challenged the strategy boardgames or marched their miniatures across terrain tables. For myself (and about 3,000 others), Nirvana was found where nearly 100 Amiga, Atari ST and C-64 computers filled the "Computer Concourse," where they were joined by a dozen Sega Genesis and eight NEC TurboGrafx games. Even the esteemed *CGW* Editor, Johnny Wilson, was impressed when he saw it.

While large-scale computer events have been a feature of GEN CON for only the past three years, they have grown in size to become the second most popular event (behind role-playing). The credit for this growth in computer gaming must go to the two local user groups, MACE (Milwaukee Area Commodore Enthusiasts) and MilAtari (the Milwaukee Atari Users Group) who organized and ran the computer games.

Both user groups took different approaches to organizing and running their computer events. While both had computer "open gaming," MilAtari ran only one other event, but did so on a huge scale. MACE, in contrast, ran a large variety of events.

The single MilAtari event was *Midi Maze*. Utilizing the best feature of the ST, its Midi Port, some 15 Atari ST systems were daisy-chained into a ring network with each player controlling his own "happy face." Four teams of different-colored happy faces stalked and assassinated each other through the maze until only one remained. With two *Midi Maze* rings being run constantly, over 1500 players competed in what was perhaps the most popular single event at GEN CON.

MACE offered over 130 different games for open gaming and ran over thirteen tournaments. This all required a great deal of effort. (Most of the computers used at GEN CON were provided by the user groups' members.)

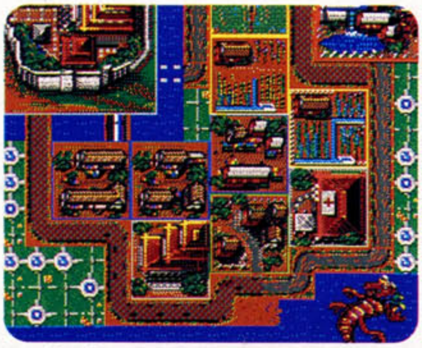
The most interesting and popular of the MACE competitions on the Amiga were the *Falcon* and *Populous* events, which used null modems to link two Amigas for head-to-head real-time gaming. This provided devotees of these games the chance to test their prowess against unpredictable flesh and blood opponents. The *Populous* tournament proved so popular that extra sessions had to be added. The C-64's most popular events were *Computer Risk!* and *Tetris*.

LucasFilm's *Their Finest Hour* game packed the room with pilots hurling their Spitfires against Heinkel 111s and their protective swarms of Me109s. A nice touch was the issue of an aerial ace certificate for every pilot scoring five or more personal kills and Battle of Britain commemorative pins to the top two pilots. I saw one pilot rack up an impressive 62 kills!

That's the word from GEN CON '90. See you in '91. **CGW**

Circle Reader Service #52 »

MOVE TO A NEW CITY.



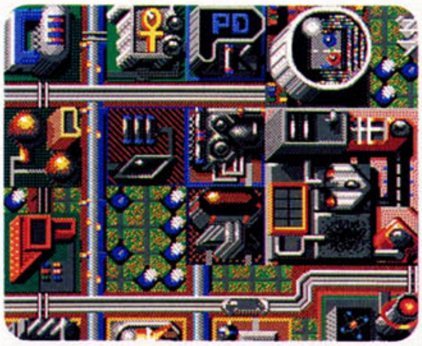
As a Shogun in Ancient Asia, you hold the secrets to the Orient. And the keys to an empire.



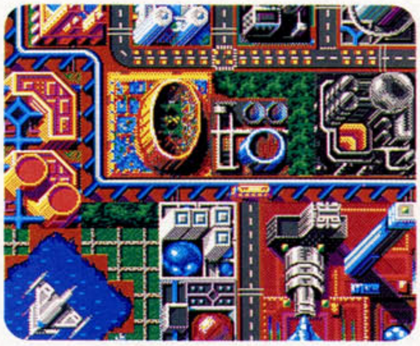
Serfs up! Thou art king or queen of your castle. Beware of plagues, dragons, witches, and other legendary dangers.



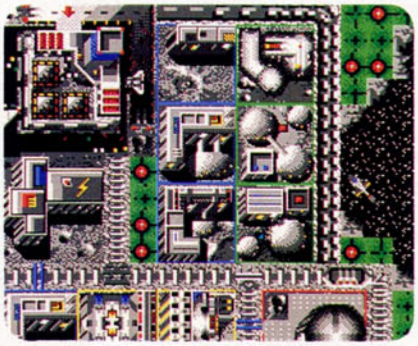
It's home on the range. And you're mayor of a bustling frontier town filled with gold, cows, and plenty o' bad guys.



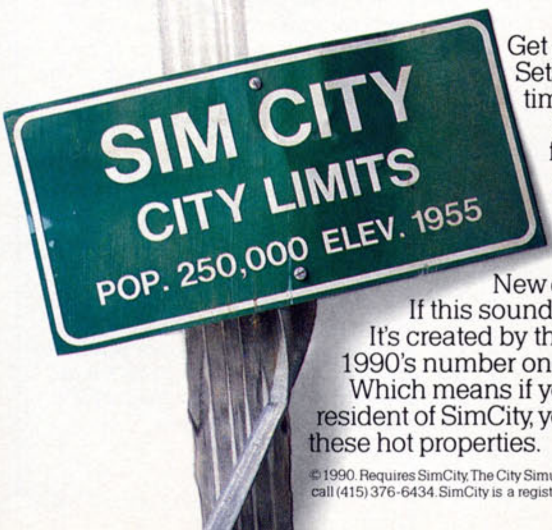
Main street U.S.A. in the 21st century. Do you have what it takes to turn your town into a thriving interplanetary hub?



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Which means if you're already a permanent resident of SimCity, you'll now have to move to these hot properties.



MAXIS

Letters from Paradise



Women's Glib

I wanted to thank you for the very complimentary sneak preview of *Spellcasting 101* in the November issue. It was impressively thorough despite the very late date on which you received the game.

On the issue of a Female Mode in lieu of Nice Mode: that wouldn't be an equal trade, by far. For one thing, Nice Mode is mostly subtractive; it's usually a matter of making something that happens in Naughty Mode *not* happen in Nice Mode (and then smoothing the edges of the resulting "hole.") A Female Mode, as in *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, would be mostly additive, requiring the addition of lots of material at all the points where gender is, uh, significant.

A larger consideration, and the main reason why *LGOP* had a Female Mode and *S101* didn't, is graphics. A Female Mode would have required a second version of dozens of pictures, and graphics are much more expensive to create and much larger to store on disk than equivalent text descriptions.

Also, I'm not sure that a Female Mode would have been more utilized than Nice Mode, since the percentage of female players still seems to be mired down around the 10% to 20% range. (And yes, before you get a chance to say it, I do worry about how those female numbers will ever increase as long as we keep catering to the male segment of the audience . . .)

A more subtle argument against a Female Mode was a complaint that I heard from several women who played the Female Mode of *LGOP*: that they were simply experiencing a male sex fantasy with the genders reversed. Clearly, a Female Mode which met this objection would require much more significant changes to the game. Furthermore, being a male, I'm not sure what a female sexual fantasy involves, and I'm pretty sure that even if I was sure, I wouldn't do a very good job writing one.

Nevertheless, despite all of the above, I very much wanted to include a Female Mode, and only gave it up with the greatest reluctance and sadness.

Thanks again for the nice write-up!

Steve Meretzky
Bedford, MA

The graphic storage question aside, it certainly sounds to us like we need male and female co-designers on games like S101 *in order to avoid patriarchal patronization. Meanwhile, the 90%+ of our readers who are male should enjoy the libidinous latitude enjoyed by Ernie Eaglebeak in* S101.

Sting Commander

I have noticed many things on Origin's *Wing Commander*'s box that are not in the game. The company advertises that "what you see is what you get" and that "every picture on this box was taken from the game." This cannot be true. Here are some of the many examples.

The lasers on the box are just that. Lasers are not *laser cannons* as in the game. They also look a heck of a lot different than in the game. There is no such person as Lt. Shadow as appears in the box in the upper left. The color and ship design in the ejection sequence is also not present (notice no wings).

There is also no PkL. Karshk (Kilrathi) in the game. The ship in the weapons diagram looks more like a Gratha than any Terran ships. Is this guy flying a Kilrathi vessel with a Kilrathi wingman? The asteroids also look quite a bit different. Of course, I don't want to be that close to them anyway. Again, though, on the bottom picture, the lasers look different. Many weapons on the box are not in the game as well. The Hornet picture (same one as Lt. Shadow) has three missiles that are not in the game. Two of them are called "FF Pikes," while the other one is unknown. And what are the yellow lines around the crosshairs? In the lower picture, none of the weapons are recognizable and the ship has a heck of a lot of them. What is a Phalanx, anyway? Now, on to the front of the box. When ships get that close, they get blotchy. Also, there is no ship named *Spiculus*. The crosshairs and lasers look different than they do in the game. *And* get a load of the speed, 2400 kps. It's not possible in the game I bought.

We'd like to explore some of this WYSIWYG confusion, as well. Why does the Hornet in the upper left screen shot have 82 rear shield points? Why are the map and text reversed on the briefing screen in the small screen shot on the back of the box? Why does the console in the bottom screen shot show a "Tape" feature that does not appear in the game? Why is "Hunter" quoted in bright yellow letters without *using his Aussie accent and using words which do not appear in the game? Why does the upper left screen shot refer to a "Cruise" position when the game's console refers to a "Set" position?*

It seems obvious that the marketing department jumped the gun by representing the game screens on the package as the final version of the game. In attempting to be able to say, "Every image on this box was taken from the game" (and to be the first *company to be able to say this), the lead time on printing the packaging made for a promotion presentation of the product. We do not believe this is* malicious *misrepresentation or even* significant *subterfuge, but Origin is risking having more cynical customers quip that "every image on the box was* taken *from the game."*

Schizophrenic Journey

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Dave Rekaiske
San Diego, CA

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Actually, *articles are often continued because of printing limitations with our new and larger format. The web press we are currently on does not allow* every *page to be a full-color page. Hence, we have to make good use of every color page we can schedule. If an article is started in two-color mode, it would be a waste to finish it in four-color. Therefore, we tend to bounce the overflow pages to the back. In the same way, we sometimes have to scramble to find an overflow page for four-color articles, so the finish of an article which begins in four-color may end up toward the back of the magazine. In general, the "broken" articles reflect production constraints.*

Another reason for breaking up articles deals with the psychology of the newsstand reader. It looks like the magazine has more to offer to the potential buyer at a magazine rack if there are eight to ten articles which begin in the first half of the book than if there are four to five *complete articles in the first half of the book. We try to pack a lot into the first part of the book so people will realize just how intense our magazine really is.* **CGW**

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*Exchange offer expires January 15, 1991. MIDI interface requires the MIDI Connector Box. Referenced products and companies are registered trademarks of their respective holders.

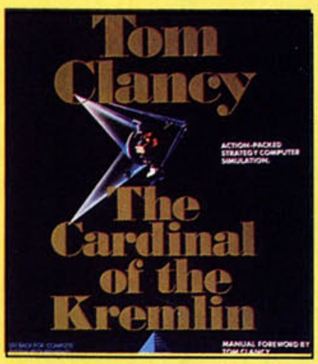
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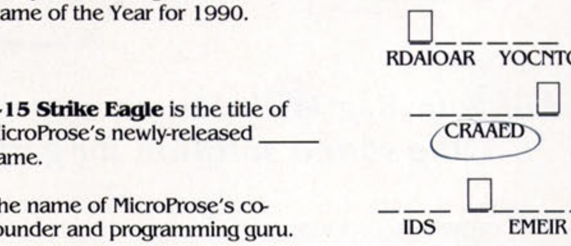
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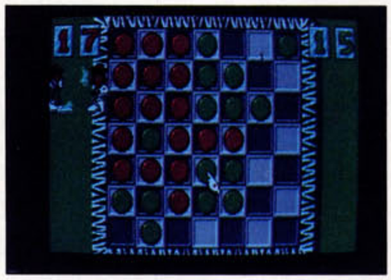
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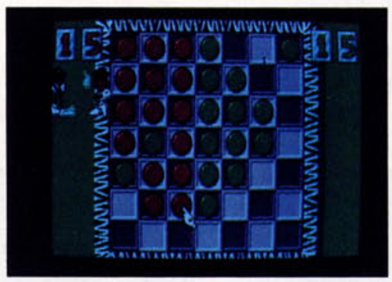
You'll See SPOT...

(Continued from page 88)

many of his or her opponent's (or opponents') "tiddlywinks" as possible. One does *not* have to "bookend" the opponent's "tiddlywinks" in order to transform them. Merely placing the "tiddlywink" adjacent to other "tiddlywinks" changes the color of all those it touches. Of course, the so-called "tiddlywinks" are merely colored "spots" in *Spot*, but unlike Jeremiah's leopard, these "spots" do change.



Send in the Clones (Game Play)



The mechanics of the game are fairly straightforward. During the player turn, one directs the famous Seven-Up Spot of television commercial fame to "clone" himself or "skip" to a square up to two squares away (i.e. leaving an intervening empty square). One can "clone" a colored spot by clicking on it with the cursor (designed in the shape of *SPOT*'s hand) and ordering *SPOT* into an adjacent square. In this case, the original colored spot stays and a new colored spot is created. As soon as one clicks on the original square, *SPOT* pops up ready to party. As soon as one chooses the destination square, *SPOT* dives, cartwheels, moonwalks, polevaults or spins into the chosen square.

One can "skip" with *SPOT* by clicking on a colored spot, then clicking on the desired square (located two squares away in any direction). Skipping has the disadvantage that one loses the square where the original colored spot was resting, but the advantage of allowing the player to cover more ground with the move (as well as seeing fancier footwork from *SPOT*).

In addition to the standard moves, *SPOT* offers an element of chance. There are secret squares located randomly on the boards. If the player directs *SPOT* to land on one of these secret squares, the bonus screen pops up and the playing field is temporarily replaced with a slot machine display. If one is able to line up three 7-Up logos, cherries, *SPOT* characters, or Virgin Mastertronic logos, he/she wins a special advantage. A player may receive extra time (in a timed game), a free turn, a free placement, or even the chance to swap colored spots with another player.

GO for It (Strategy)

Many players feel like *SPOT: The Computer Game* also bears a resemblance to the ancient Oriental game of *Go*. The objectives of the games are the same, territorial conquest, and the playing pieces are similar, colored stones and circles. Similar to *Go*, it is impossible for the player to protect *all* of his or her pieces (spots), so one must think ahead far enough that it is possible to gain more squares via capturing one's opponent's pieces than one will lose during the opponent's turn. Also like *Go*, the player needs to make sure that he/she is continually expanding the friendly territory. If he/she is not careful, it is possible to be squeezed in and have to forfeit a move. Unlike *Go*, one can have up to three opponents trying to whittle away at one's territory. Also, the shape of the game board can change from game to game.

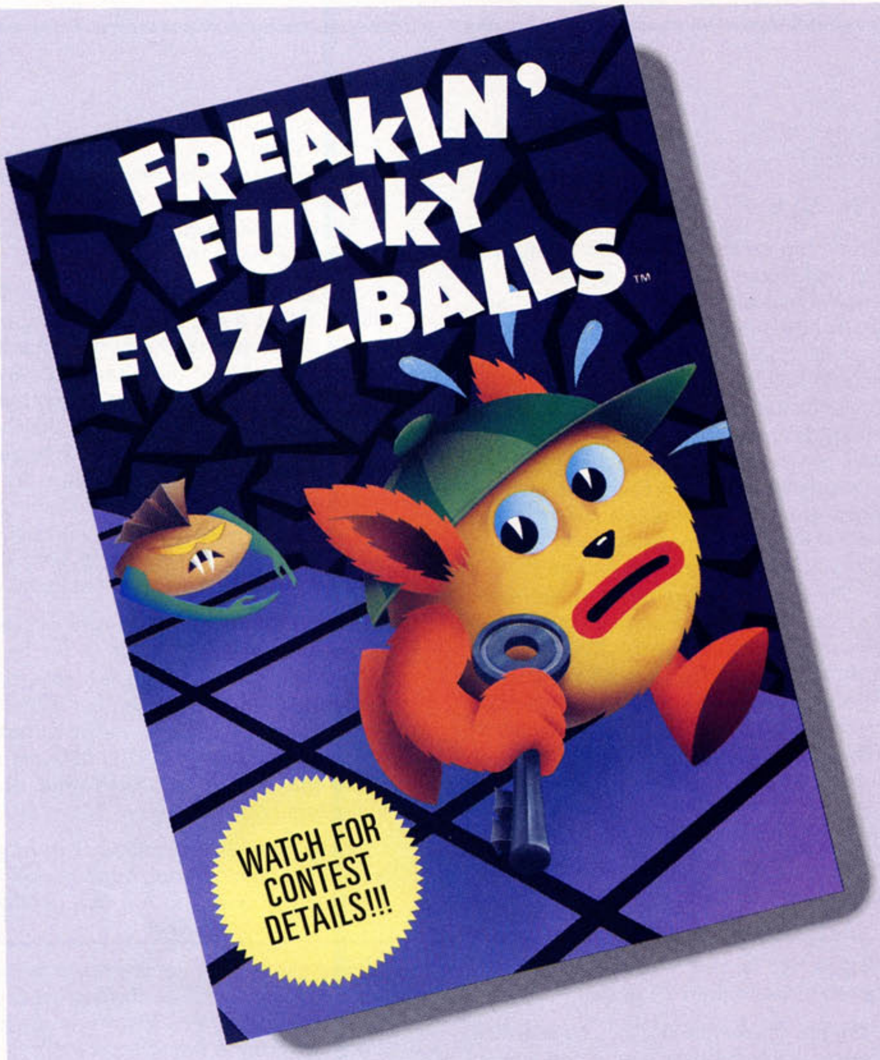
Initial Moves: Players need to build a power base by "cloning" their spots from the beginning. The documentation suggests building two by two squares and this is sound strategy. One must watch out, however, as the opponents' spots get within two squares. Should "cloning" a spot leave a "gap" next to three colored spots (in sort of an "L" shape), the opponent will usually "skip" into that gap. Try to extend the squares in such a way that the gap from an odd-numbered "clone" move is always more than two squares from the nearest spot of an opponent. By the same token, one should be alert for the first time the opponent leaves a gap next to three of his/her spots. Such an oversight provides the first legitimate opportunity to gain from a "skip" move.

Mid-Game: Players should always think through the next series of moves which could feasibly be made by their opponents. In a four-player game, there are three possible moves to be made before the player has a chance to recover from any wrong moves committed during his/her current turn. Players must evaluate whether any potential move will still be a net gain after those turns are completed. If so, the move is probably a sound one. If not, the player needs to try another approach.

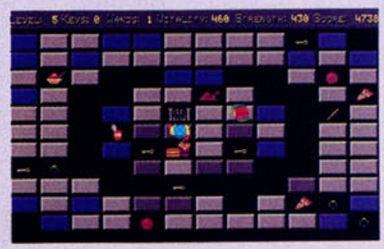
End Game: Players who are behind must be bold, using a plethora of "skip" moves to keep the balance shifting between one's opponents until he/she has a chance to make a decisive move. Players who are ahead must keep expanding slowly, but surely, using "clone" moves to build territories which cannot be taken away from them.

On the Spot

SPOT: The Computer Game offers a simple concept with cute graphics and stimulating game play. It offers fast play, multi-player interaction, a long shelf life and much delight. Here is an anecdote which illustrates how exceptional *SPOT: The Computer Game* is. In ten years of covering computer games, only once has *CGW*'s editor-in-chief entered a hospitality suite and immediately seated himself at a computer console to play a game. That game was *SPOT: The Computer Game*. **CGW**







"Zapper's more persistant than a portable vacuum."
Fuzzball Life & Times

"My employees aren't getting any work done. I just know there's a boss key."
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"Honey? Are you ever coming to bed?"
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AdLib SOUND

Hammering Herman

(Continued from page 72)

them. There will be many times in a player's career that while busily filling a target with lead "up its six" (from directly behind), he forgets to check his speed and whooshes right past the enemy.

This means *slow down*. Try to remember to reduce speed by hitting the minus key just prior to letting loose with the bullets, then speed up with the plus key when flying past a target. This tactic works well and can make the difference between a crippling and killing pass. This tactic is also useful for staying behind wounded Me109's that keep twisting out of one's sights by turning.

Slowing down must be used cautiously, though. It is tantamount to painting "shoot me here" on the tail of one's fighter. If there is a 109 closing from behind when you start flying straight for a target, then slowing down will allow the enemy to rip one's plane up so badly the only word that comes to mind is "perforated." *[Ed. — I can think of a few others.]*

Tip Six

Ride the rollercoaster when tailing rear-gunned planes. Understand that the enemy rear gunner is watching and waiting for the chance to do what he does best: fill chase planes full of lead. The way to foil that rear gunner is to use the rollercoaster tactic of approaching straight on until he opens fire, then diving. Once below his field of fire, the rear-gunner ceases to shoot. At that point, the player's nose should be raised until the target plane is again in sight so that another burst or two can be fired at it. The trick is to dive down again before the rear gunner gets another bead on the player's fighter. Be aware that this tactic is straight out of Bomber Killing 101. It's effective, but time consuming, and often costs the player a few bullet holes when charging in for the kill to finish off a softened bomber.

Tip Seven

Never forget your goals and their priority. In summary, they are:

1. Stay alive.
2. Disrupt enemy bombing runs, thus saving your ground facilities.
3. Shoot down enemy bombers.
4. Destroy German fighter support.

Of course, the challenging part of the game is that these priorities are most easily accomplished in *reverse* order! Fighters are fun to play "tag" with and enjoyable to shoot down, but taking too much time to do so allows the bombers to drop their loads and start for home. Once bombers are headed home, it's easy to take the time to pick them off, but to do so means missing an opportunity to disrupt the incoming bombers who haven't dropped their payloads yet.

Even in the best of play, one will lose airfields, planes and factories. Success is measured by slowing these losses down. Time will pass and September 17th will arrive leaving the player in the midsts of a mass of smoking ruins and, hopefully, a still effective fighting force (and, thus, a victorious conclusion).

Finally, stay alert, remember what was learned in flight school, and beware of the Hun in the sun. Good day, gentlemen.

CGW

Their Finest Holiday

(Continued from page 58)

what would cause this scene to be forever memorable was the lady who stood next to us on the bridge and told us stories of her experiences as a girl during the Blitz. The bombs, the sirens, the devastating damage, the massive evacuation of children (including herself) to the country. Stories like hers and those of dozens of others made the tour more than a tour; it became living history.

Among the highlights of the tour were the world-famous Farnborough Air Show, the Duxford Airshow, the 50th Anniversary London Flypast; and the 50th Anniversary Fireworks exhibition already mentioned.

The Farnborough show featured the world's largest aircraft, the Soviet A-225 *Mriya* transport which amazed the spectators as it dominated the sky during its flight. The An-225 has half again the capacity of the US Air Force's C5A Galaxy. Duxford featured a mock air battle between Spitfires, a Hurricane, and the only presently airworthy Me-109. The London Flypast featured 166 aircraft flying in formation over Buckingham Palace (the largest flypast over Buckingham in more than 35 years).

Biggin Hill. Middle Wallop. Thorpe Abbotts. Duxford. North Weald. Seething. The English have such great place names. They also have a good sense of humor about it. There is a town in the East Anglian region of England called "Bury St. Edmunds". When one of us asked the coach driver "how long 'til we get to Bury St. Edmunds?" he replied "Why? Has he died?"

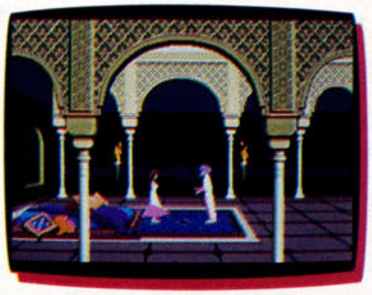


Wielding the Norwhich Sword of State (tipped by a chape of the Royal Arms of Henry VIII)
CGW editor-in-chief Russell Sipe "knights" Their Finest Hour *champion Roger Besaw.*

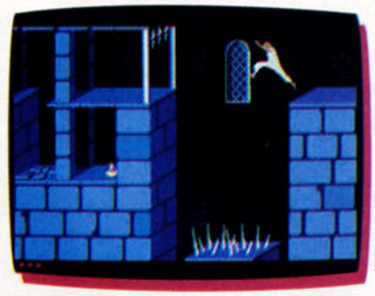
"You really have to see it to believe it."

Computer Entertainer

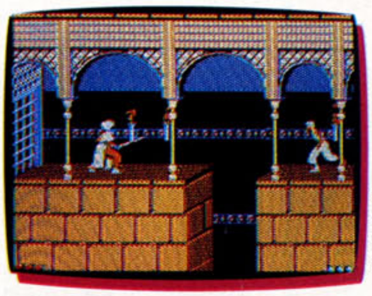
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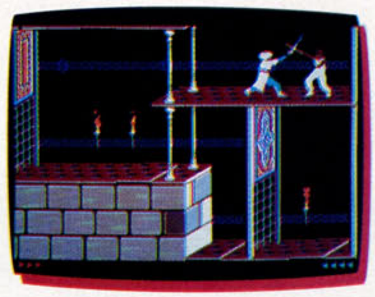
VGA SCREEN



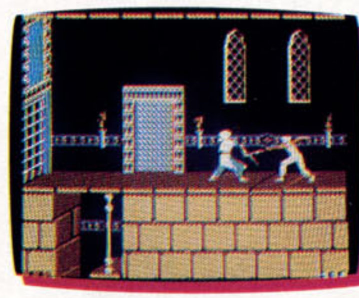
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82POD

Scorpion's Tale

(Continuedfrom 44)

their tans. So much for teamwork and daring rescues.

With nothing better to do, Guy might as well explore as much of the ship as he can, from the crow's nest to the leaky hold. At the very least, he'll find more inventory. Like a whole cupboard full of cereal that looks suspiciously like Cap'n Crunch (sorta reminds me of Cracker Jacks . . .). Just remember, if it ain't nailed down, grab it! And I'll bet once Guy has everything, he could really cook up a storm in that galley (hohoho).

Hey! Look! That's Monkey Island™ off the port bow! Wowee!! Well, someone had to show a little enthusiasm. The crew is as laid-back and blase as ever. Even reaching the island can't shake them out of their vacation mode. Ho hum.

Of course, you understand the ship is not docked (there isn't a dock, for one thing). So Guy is gonna have to find a way to get from here to there. It's not hard. Think Italian.

At last, Guy has reached (almost, that is) his destination. Naturally, there are a few things to do here. Like finding the way to the ghost ship. (Nope, no big neon signs that say "This way to the Ghost Ship"; sorry about that.)

Okay, first order of business is, as usual, looking around. Don't worry, Guy won't get lost in the jungle, so go ahead and explore. There's a nifty rowboat (not even leaky!) on the beach. With a pair of oars, Guy could really get around. Wonder where the oars might be?

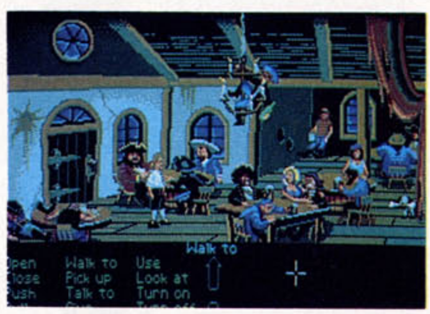
'Smatter of fact, they're at the bottom of a crevice. Find some rope, Guy, and you're all set. Meanwhile, keep walking around. That pond at the end of the dry riverbed looks interesting. Umm. Well, that's not a sight you see every day (and a good thing, too). Herman Toothrot, a sometimes-informative castaway who pops up now and then, will be happy to explain why his friend is just, shall we say?, hanging around doing nothing. Come to think of it, just why *is* that riverbed dry, anyhow?

Don't overlook the fort at the top of the volcano. Some nice stuff up there is just waiting for Guy's sticky fingers. Tower Rock (at the river fork) is another good tourist attraction. That primitive art looks especially interesting. Bet you can do all sorts of neat things with it. Of course, you'd better save first or you just might be sunk.

Guy might be wondering about that little monkey. Let me tell you, that's one hungry monkey and it's gonna take a lot of bananas to make him happy. One skimpy fruit off the beach just won't do the job. You'll need, oh, maybe four or five of them.

As Guy meanders about, he'll come across various notes and memos that provide a fascinating insight into the social life of the island. Letters from Herman to the cannibals. Missives from the cannibals to LeChuck, and vice-versa. Eh? Cannibals??? Oh, don't worry, they're trying to cut back a bit on cholesterol levels these days, so they're probably harmless. Kinda.

It's not easy to make friends with cannibals, even health-conscious ones, but I'm sure Guy can manage it (that's no idol statement . . . or is it?). Anyway, once he has the key to the Monkey's Head, he shouldn't go rushing right off. Finding LeChuck takes more than just desire. Those are nasty catacombs down



there, and Guy can't get ahead unless he has a head, so he'd better get a head.

Okay, now let's go below and see what's there. Ick! That red stuff gurgling by ain't lava. If Guy can't figure out what it is, maybe all those eyes, noses, hearts, and what have you stuck in the walls and floors will clue him in. Definitely, this is not a nice place. Try not to look as you walk by.

Finally, the ghost ship! Of course, Guy can't just go waltzing in there. At least, not without a little protection. Heads up, and all that.

Well, looks like some of the crew is on deck and carousing the night away. Maybe they won't hear as Guy opens the creaking door. Fat chance! That's one mighty big creeeeak. Something will have to be done about that. Especially since the voodoo root is below in the hold, in a crate nailed, chained, glued and otherwise securely battened down . . . and the tools are (of course) behind the creaking door (hmmm, sounds like a great title for a horror story).

Anyway, what about the rest of the ship? Not much to see, except for the captain's cabin, and the captain is *in*. He is also not deaf. That's the problem with being invisible: it doesn't make you inaudible, too. So, how is Guy gonna snarf that key on the wall, when he can't just walk up to it? Good question. Wonder what the key is made of? (No, doesn't look like wood . . .)

Good work, Guy! With voodoo root in hand, it's time for a quick (very quick!) trip to the cannibals, and then back to the ship. Ooops! Looks like the ship is gone! Only one of the ghost crew is left. Left behind, poor thing. And he so wanted to be at the wedding.

Wedding?? Egads, while Guy was shlepping back and forth, LeChuck set sail for Melee Island™ to marry his beloved! Oh no! Quick, back home to the island! The wedding has to be stopped!

Just in time, Guy makes it to the church. But, just in time for what? Ah, there's a surprise or two in store here! Not to mention the Big Fight (every hero has to have a Big Fight With The Main Bad Guy At The End) between Guy and LeChuck. Will Guy prevail? Will he be reunited with the Governor? Will he ever drink root beer again? Play the game and find out the answers to these and other pressing questions!

Whew! Well, maybe the Caribbean isn't quite the place for your next vacation after all . . . at least, not if it's Melee Island™. In case you've been wondering, throughout the game, that's how the names are displayed, with that little ™ after them. We don't know if **Lucasfilm** is poking fun at their tendency to trademark *everything* (including names from the Bible) or making absolutely certain of ancillary rights for future products, so we'll just humor them, this issue.

Anyway, I see by the old invisible clock on the wall™ it's that time again. If you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi, stop by the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie, visit the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, N.Y. 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!

CGW



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Over There

(Continued from page 20)

acter into precise positions to examine/pick-up objects. This has now been corrected, with *Operation Stealth* being more forgiving in that area. Available now on the Amiga and ST for £24.99.

Dragonflight, from German software house **Thalion**, takes a top-down view for the surface landscape with a first-person perspective down in the dungeons. Basically, the story involves finding out what has happened to the dragons that lived in the vale—have they vanished or been killed?

You control four pre-rolled characters during the quest. The principal elements of the game system are standard in this genre. Visit a variety of towns, buy weapons and food, talk to people and hang around taverns for information.

Thalion has developed a very efficient menu system that cuts "mouse-wandering" down to a minimum. Interaction is achieved by clicking on a "mouth" icon. No parser or keyword system is employed. NPC replies are quite wordy, though.

Combat takes a novel perspective. Your view shifts to a close up side-on viewpoint, complete with animated action, immediately after you despatch your orders. An overhead window gives you a tactical view of the protagonists' positions. Magic is handled in a minimal fashion, as each character must learn spells, but only one spell at a time may be held in memory. Available now on the Amiga and ST for £24.99.

Distributed by German software house **Rainbow Arts**, *Conqueror* is a 3-D tactical tank game that can be played on an arcade, semi-arcade, and strategy level. You have external control over one or more tanks that run upon a 3-D, undulating landscape. Buildings, trees, hills and roads provide some of the scenery. On the top-level strategy area you "buy" your tanks from a limited budget (you can buy a mix of German, American or British light, medium and heavy tanks). Then you are given a primary and secondary objective. Artillery bombardment and spotter planes are available here. Control is fairly detailed as individual tracks are separately controlled, as is the turret and gun. Available now for the Amiga and ST for £19.99.

Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

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SDC, 60 Boston Road, London, England, W7 3TR. Telephone: 01144-1-567-7621

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When You're in Command, *Command*!

(Continued from page 41)
and serves as a good introductory scenario which will continue to challenge experienced players long after the game is mastered.

The WWII scenario begins at a point in early 1942 and adds armor, aircraft carriers and air units to the game. The reduced American navy is based in Hawaii and off of north-eastern Australia, the Japanese navy is at home and can strike in any direction. The Germans and Russians are heavily engaged and Britain is in a weakened state. The allies need time because, with their larger economy, they can eventually prevail if they can conduct some early, skillful defense.

This is a similar situation to that offered in the 1986 "WW III" scenario. Here, everything gets added to the game: oil, nukes, satellites, killer satellites ("k-sats"), foreign aid and intelligence scans. These latter two items are used during the "two-minute drill" of cold-war diplomacy and maneuvering before either player has the option to declare war (and, also, during any truce which the players might agree to).

Peacetime, that lull before the shooting begins prior to the WWIII and WWIV scenarios, is an interesting game of politics and economics. Income is generated much faster during these periods of non-combat, so the purchasing of new units becomes much easier. Furthermore, units may be "teleported" to new (and more threatening) locations at will during peacetime. The only way to get an idea where the enemy is concentrating is to conduct an intelligence scan, which will show you the positions (although not the *types*) of enemy units across the board.

During peacetime *and* wartime, foreign aid can be used to "buy" the allegiance of neutral countries. The going rate is $10 billion per city or base in the country. If the enemy invades a neutral during a war, the other player can often buy their loyalty wholesale on the foreign aid market. Buying loyalty during peacetime is vital for giving the player a strategic area in which to base troops for the forthcoming conflict. Areas around the Middle East and other oil-producing regions become foreign aid "sink holes" in no time as both players often contest each other around these important strategic locations.

The Russian player begins the WWIII scenario with a huge army has which must strike hard and fast in order to secure a solid enough economic base to achieve total victory. Thus, all of Europe must be overrun, and the Middle East seized quickly, with a minimum of casualties. This done, the fleet much be launched across the Atlantic before the Americans can prepare a proper defense. This usually means staging the Russian army in through Cuba. For the Allies, tenacity is the key. The Suez and Panama canals are the keys to operational flexibility and efficiently mobilizing the economy is a paramount concern. Keep a satellite over the North Atlantic to watch for that Russian fleet!

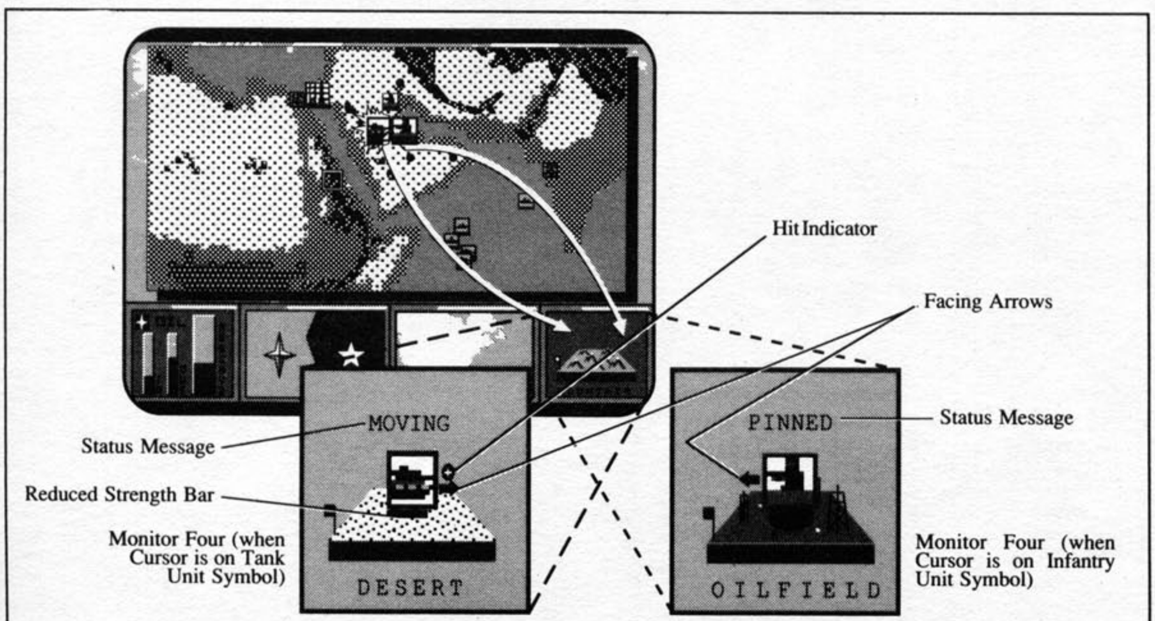
The WWIV scenario (circa 2023) again uses every option. In this scenario, however, capitols and territories are assigned randomly (for the two "new" superpowers). Players begin dead even in terms of resources and starting funds, each with no armies and few allies, but plenty of money to purchase both. The five-minute cold-war interlude becomes an exhilarating, frenzied race to formulate a grand strategy and then conduct it from the ground up. No doubt this one will become the hard-core player's scenario of choice.

The final scenario has no year, being dated ???? It presupposes the collapse of governments, so that the world is naught but city-states (and oil wells) ripe for the picking. Each player begins with only his capital, $50 billion and the world to conquer. This might be thought of as the *Empire* scenario. The enemy's capital must be discovered and captured in order to win the game. This scenario uses no nukes, satellites, k-sats, foreign aid or intelligence scans. It is just a good, old-fashioned, hammer and tongs slug-out kind of strategy game.

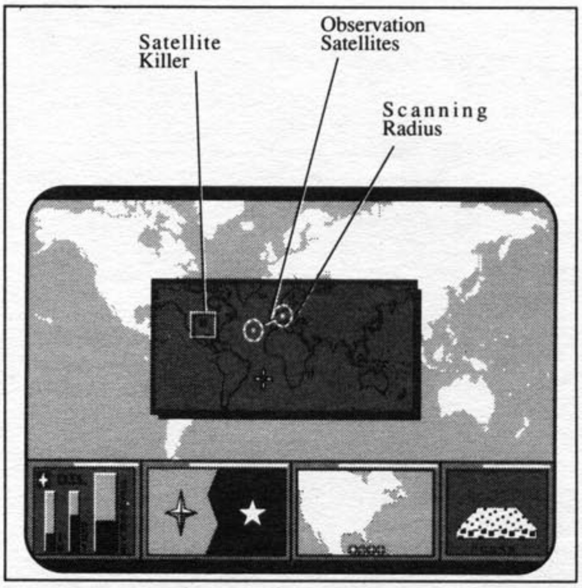
Surveillance

The beauty of this game is its handling of limited intelligence. Players simply do not know how the enemy is maneuvering behind the lines. Each unit has a "radar range", which is the distance at which it spots enemy units. Naturally, aircraft units and carriers have the longest range and infantry the shortest. When playing the WW III or IV scenarios, satellites can be launched which park over a certain part of the globe and inform a player of *everything* the enemy has there, except for submarines. During peace-time, the only real clue as to the position of *any* enemy forces is through the use of an intelligence scan. This, though, pre-sents its own drawbacks. The cat-and-mouse aspects of using satellites and killer-satellites is yet another element of conflict and subterfuge in *Command HQ*.

Fortunately, the question of "what can the enemy see of my forces?" is easily answered. A simple keystroke reveals the "common" units visible to both



sides. Thus, the screen shows all enemy forces discovered, but only the player's units which the enemy can currently "see." It is hard not to gloat after finding out that the enemy has no clue about the huge invasion armada heading his way. Such is the nature of war.



Combat Doctrine

Combat is by attrition and tends to be protracted enough for players to have a chance to react. Each unit has a strength bar which runs along its bottom. As units suffer casualties, this bar shortens. Units may be "repaired" at friendly objectives, with ships limited to finding repairs at dock spaces only. Thus, over time, units will become revived and able to fight another day. This method of unit "replacements" is infinitely cheaper than repurchasing units as reinforcements. Salvaging the expensive units (carriers and armor) is *especially* important for this reason.

When land and naval units engage another unit in battle, they acquire a "facing." Units attacked from directions other than their facing suffer additional damage from those attacks (thus, armor overruns and infantry airdrops can become decisive). Furthermore, each unit "shoots" only once per turn, but can be attacked by as many units as can be brought to bear against it. Thus, flooding a defender with several attackers will keep an attacker's casualties low.

Air units can deliver devastating air strikes, but also abstractly fight each other (with the computer determining failed mission and aircraft eliminated results). Airpower is vital to any operation's success due to its enormous sighting and combat ranges.

Ships have different "arm's lengths." Carriers can strike from a good distance, while cruisers must have their icons touching the enemy they wish to bombard. Submarines, on the other hand, must have their icon overlap the enemy to be attacked. Thus, a well-managed naval battle will go to a solid combined arms navy.

Nuclear Viability

Nukes are a touchy point in this game. At the time of this writing, the penalties for the use of nukes has been greatly increased over previous test versions *[Ed.: Amen!]*. The first player to use a nuke is at a particular disadvantage. *[Ed.: Not only politically, but pragmatically correct!]* On the upside, an entire mass of enemy troops can be wiped out, with naught but a nuclear wasteland where they once stood. *[Ed.: This is the upside?]* On the downside, allies and "their forces" will defect to the other player or become neutral, while neutrals might throw in with the enemy! One drawback in the game's artificial intelligence is that the computer player will never use nukes. Thus, the penalty is twice as severe when playing against the computer as opposed to playing against another human player. Two other limiting factors concerning nukes is that a player cannot use nukes if he has nuked his opponent three times without retaliation and, if too many nukes are used, a nuclear winter can be triggered.

Advanced Functions

Command HQ is an extraordinary pleasure to play because so many user comfort features were built in. When one "zooms" in the map to observe an operational area of the strategic board, the zoom window can be altered to one of three different sizes, each centering on the targeted area. "Macro" functions can also be programmed for a player's convenience. Usually, this entails programming an instant zoom to a hotspot with a single keystroke. As battle reports come in, there are several ways for the player to instantly zoom to the crisis spot, and the destinations for one's troops and the paths they'll take are quickly and easily accessed.

The "gee whiz" features of *Command HQ* are threefold and quite remarkable in a strategy game. One allows the player to switch sides at any point in a game. Whether the computer is kicking one's booty and the player wants to check out what's going on on the other side, or when conducting a 2-player game on a single computer, it's a remarkable function. Secondly, there is a feature which can instantly turn any solo game into a two-player game. Call it the old "care to join me?" feature.

Finally, each game, when concluded, is saved as a "film" (which, in turn, can be stored in a file). Not only can this film be reviewed (from either side's perspective, or only showing the units common to both sides' observations) allowing one to study strategies and discover why certain things did and didn't work (and perhaps learn how one's opponent thinks), but there is also an extra feature. While watching a film, at any point, it can be turned back into a game! Thus, if a player wants to go back to a certain point and "correct his mistakes," he can. It allows players to explore all the options available at decisive points in the war. This is an outstanding feature for students of *Command HQ* to revel in, and one which sets this game above the pack and will give it a long life in the computer strategy game market.

Intelligence Gaps

The computer "player" has certain inherent limits to its capabilities as an opponent. Aside from the aforementioned fact that it (rather sanely) never uses nukes, it is also loath to conduct "fleet tactics" when maneuvering its navy, opting instead to send ships out singly or in pairs, rather than in large, protective groupings. The computer is also limited in that it will not conduct airdrop missions. Finally, the artificial intelligence does not discriminate against different objectives. It "sees" every oil well, city and base as the same type of "target," and thus will not concentrate on, say, oil objectives, even though it is suffering a terrible shortfall in fuel.

Prognosis

If there *could* be "winners" in a global war, it would have to be all the players of *Command HQ*. **MicroProse** and Ozark Softscape have redefined how computer strategy/war games can (and should) be played. The tense, real-time pressure of warfare against another human player in a true test of strategy is the most challenging and rewarding experience that enthusiasts of this genre of game can hope to achieve. Despite the fact that a computer opponent can never quite challenge a player as a live opponent can, *Command HQ* offers the best of both worlds. This *is* the game we've all been waiting for. **CGW**

Secret Weapons

(Continued from page 17)

economy. The irony is that strategic bombing's great contribution was that it pulled the Luftwaffe up in 1944. With long range escort fighters we were in a position to destroy the Luftwaffe over Germany, which gave us the air superiority that made Normandy possible.

* * * * *

CGW: Getting back to the dam-busting raids. You had low-level torpedo attacks in *Battlehawks 1942*. Will you include the dam-busting raids in *SWOTL*?

Holland: Not as a specific mission in which you fly against the dam and use skip bombs to attack it. However, you will be able to select the dams as strategic high-level bombing targets.

CGW: Why are you excluding the dam-busting raids?

It's a matter of scope. The game will concentrate on American bombing campaign and will emphasis the American attitudes and decisions. To include the British attacks on the dams would require the expansion of the game beyond the present scope.

CGW: So the game is primarily from the 8th Air Force perspective?

Murray: It is entirely from the 8th Air Force perspective because Larry is not even including B-24s in the game.

* * * * * *

CGW: The dilemma in computer games that try to recreate history is that the history of the battle is already known. From a game design standpoint, history takes away the fog of war. The task here is to put the fog back into the battle.

Holland: I've been thinking about that issue too. I have already been asking Professor Murray how they figured out how effective the bombing was. Of course, the Allies had a great leg up on the Germans because they had Ultra, which was the best source of information about how effective our bombing was. But if you take away Ultra then the fog of war *really* comes in. Additionally, reconnaissance flights were subject to variable weather. There could be a long delay in finding out how effective a raid was.

Murray: For example, in the Battle of Berlin Harris [chief of Bomber Command] hit them at the end of November '43 and because of the cloud cover they didn't get their first pictures until February '44! In terms of figuring out the effectiveness of his attack, he had no idea for almost three months.

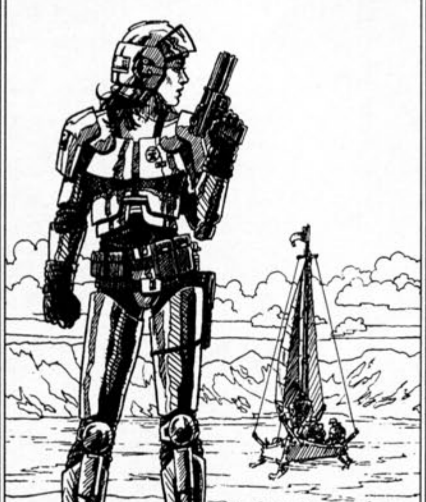
Holland: So weather will play a part in the campaign game. Certain targets are unavailable because you cannot see them. Or you hit them but may not get the results of your attack because of weather conditions.

CGW: So you plan to use the weather and clouds as a very literal "fog of war" element.

Holland: Yes.

CGW: Are you planning to use Ultra as a variable level of information?

Holland: Yes. There was randomness in the way Ultra worked. They did not get 100% de-encription. That gives us a little latitude to play with the information we give the player. **CGW**





On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 4, please rate the following games (only if you have played them!) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A = Excellent
B = Above Average
C = Average
D = Below Average
F = Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

   1 = Under 14 years old
   2 = 14-17 years old
   3 = 18-20 years old
   4 = 21-30 years old
   5 = 31-35 years old
   6 = 36-40 years old
   7 = 41-50 years old
   8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?
(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in descending order of use).

   1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
   2 = Amiga
   3 = Apple 8 bit
   4 = Apple IIgs
   5 = Atari ST
   6 = Atari 8 bit
   7 = C-64/128
   8 = Macintosh
   9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

   1 = Less than 2 hours
   2 = 2-5 hours
   3 = 6-10 hours
   4 = 11-20 hours
   5 = 21-30 hours
   6 = 31+ hours

Conversions Received

Anarchy (Psygnosis) Amiga
Dark Heart of Uukrul (Broderbund) IBM
DragonStrike (SSI) Amiga
Ishido (Accolade) Amiga
King's Quest I: Enhanced Version (Sierra) IBM
Loom (LucasFilm) Amiga
Out Run (SEGA) Atari ST, IBM
Pipe Dream (LucasFilm) Apple
Pool of Radiance (SSI) Amiga
Puffy's Saga (UBI Soft) C64
Rastan (Taito) IIGS
War Eagles (Cosmi) IBM

Games

4. Pipe Dream (LucasFilm)
5. Unreal (UBI Soft)
6. Star Control (Accolade)
7. Ishido (Accolade)
8. Citadel (Postcraft Int.)
9. Legend of Faerghail (Reline)
10. MegaTraveller 1 (Paragon)
11. Silent Service II (MicroProse)
12. Ultima V (Origin)
13. Starflight 2 (EA)
14. Battlechess II, Chinese Chess (Interplay)
15. Pictionary (Domark)
16. King's Bounty (New World)
17. Wings (Cinemaware)
18. Spot (Virgin Mastertronic)
19. Guns or Butter (Mindscape)
20. Buck Rogers Countdown to Doomsday (SSI)
21. A-10 Tank Killer (Dynamix)
22. The Punisher (Paragon)
23. Projectyle (EA)
24. Bard's Tale III (EA)
25. Red Storm Rising (MicroProse)
26. Duck Tales: The Quest For Gold (Disney)
27. Stratego (Accolade)
28. Tennis Cup (Electronic Zoo)
29. Nobunaga's Ambition (Koei)
30. Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
31. Railroad Tycoon (MicroProse)
32. SimCity (Maxis)
33. Ultima VI (Origin)
34. Harpoon (Three-Sixty)
35. M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse)
36. Command HQ (MicroProse)
37. Secret of Monkey Island (Lucasfilm)
38. Stunt Driver (Spectrum Holobyte)
39. Wing Commander (Origin)

Articles

40. Command HQ Review
41. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe Sneak Preview
42. Wing Commander Review
43. Over There
44. DragonStrike Review
45. Industry Update
46. Star Control Strategy, Part II
47. Scorpion's Tale: The Secret of Monkey Island
48. Scorpion's View: Altered Destiny
49. The Global Dilemma: Guns or Butter Review
50. Sound Board Survey
51. Stormovik SU-25 Review
52. The Punisher Review
53. Their Finest Hour RAF Strategy
54. Strike Aces Review
55. Wings Review
56. Spot Review
57. D.R.A.G.O.N. Force Review
58. Gen-Con Report
59. Rumor Bag
60. Editorial


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Taking a Peek

(Continued from page 10)

the player much to discover en route to the legendary Cheyennes' gold mine. This action adventure game does not (yet, we're assured) support sound boards for the IBM version. Amiga, Atari ST, IBM, Macintosh ($39.99). Circle Reader Service #5.

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501

STUNT DRIVER: If there's a feature missing from this program, we sure can't find it. A state-of-the-art automobile driving/race/stunt simulator, *Stunt Driver* also throws in such features as custom track design, multiple opponents, modem head-to-head play, full VCR replay options, multiple car types, handling variables and lots more. Higher resolution graphics and sound are pretty much for the faster machines only. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #6.



Colorado



Stunt Driver

Walt Disney Computer Software, Inc.
500 S. Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521

DUCKTALES, THE QUEST FOR GOLD: One thing Disney knows is how to tell a tale. *DuckTales* has a nice scavenger hunt action/exploration story to help carry along the adequate graphics in this adventure/arcade game. Flying the airplane and exploring the mountains, jungles and caves require considerably more dexterity than some youngsters may possess, but the game is recommended for ages eight and up. IBM ($44.95), Amiga, C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #7

MICKEY'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE MAKER: This is definitely the game one would like to have their 1st through 4th grader playing on the school Apple computer. The clues and words are right at that level, and the kids can play solitaire, against one of three computer characters (from Goofy to Mickey) or play against other kids by sharing the same computer. Creative kids (and parents/teachers) can invent puzzles to reflect this week's spelling words, and even print them out! Apple II series ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #8. **CGW**

Designers' Notes

(Continued from page 50)

take place without a significant struggle with the cultists.

The Oracle expands on the story by revealing some information about a pureblood who might have some useful information. He has been captured by the "tuffs" of the mutant village of Okkarn. The goal of this mini-quest is to free the pureblood, against the objections of the mutants holding him, in order to learn that Lord Dominix has imprisoned Captain Equitus of Xantinium in the town of Yvrium. Dominix's plan is to convince Lady Cassia, Equitus' mother, that the mutants have taken and killed her son. If she were to believe this, even the normally open-minded Cassia might be convinced to join Dominix's war against the mutants.

Returning to the Oracle for a final consultation, the player's character is encouraged to find and rescue Equitus because he should be able to help stop the war. Those who play Dekker, the human tuff or Jakka, a human-appearing mutant, can simply walk into Yvrium. Of course, those who play Varigg, the green mutant, need to wear a slave's collar to enter the city. To get a collar, though, one will have to ambush a party of human slavers and take it by force.

In Yvrium, the gossip is full of the exploits of Bessek, a renegade mutant who attacked Lord Dominix and nearly killed him. Bessek is being held until the next running of the Mutant Games, where he will be executed in gladiatorial combat. Naturally, it becomes of paramount importance to free Bessek, a hero to the mutants. Then, the liberated Bessek can direct the hero or heroine to the Subs, a secret society of mutant freedom fighters who live beneath the streets of Zero Town. Upon arrival, the leader of the Subs explains that Captain Equitus is being held in the tunnels beneath Dominix's palace. He also reveals that the keys to Equitus' cell should be in the possession of Captain Theodus, chief of Dominix's guard.

By posing as the servant who brings Theodus his meals, it is easy to slip into the Captain's quarters and find the keys. Talking to the town historian, as well as to its resident thief, uncovers the secret that the dry well in the northwest corner of town can be used to enter the underground tunnel system. Those who enter the depths of the forgotten catacombs must negotiate the dark and dangerous remains of an ancient fallout shelter. If one can avoid harm from the variety of mutated giant rats, hideously deformed humans and other beasts, it is possible to locate Equitus' guarded cell.

The freeing of Equitus brings about the dramatic endgame sequences which tell the conclusion to the story. In this sequence, Equitus reveals the treachery—and deception—of Dominix, a mutant himself! Equitus is made the new Lord by the people (mutants and purebloods alike) so that he and the Lady Cassia may usher in a new era of peace and brotherhood. The player's character is made the new Lord of the mutants of the plains, as a reward for valor and courage.

The Bottom Line

From the beginning, the player of *Bad Blood* is made aware that his goal is to help avert a civil war between the pureblooded humans and their mutant cousins. In the story's conclusion, that war is averted by the unmasking of Lord Dominix's dark secret about his less-than-pure heritage. Thus, hypocrisy in high places is uncovered and justice is brought to light. **CGW**

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"If restaurant critics can quantify a subjective experience such as dining into a five-star rating system," runs the logic, "why can't *CGW* offer a rating system along with their reviews?" We hear from readers and advertisers alike that we should rate software on a standard scale.

Frankly, the issue comes up for editorial discussion from time to time and has been rejected for several reasons. First of all, we feel that the ratings provided by our readers *are* a standard. If we were to provide a reviewer's rating along with each review, we would be contaminating the readers' ratings that we depend upon. Many readers would tend to simply follow the leader in rating the games, instead of offering their honest opinions.

Second, there is no real standard when different criteria are involved. If the same person were reviewing every piece of software, the numerical rating would mean something because the same criteria would be utilized in the same way. Since we use several different reviewers, the ratings would be *extremely* uneven, according to their tastes. Some have suggested that we could ameliorate this unevenness by using three ratings per review. Of course, our readers' ratings offer a more consistent means of providing a quantitative rating by using considerably *more* than three ratings per game. So, why change a successful formula?

Further, getting three ratings per review would take more logistical effort should the ones providing the ratings be "out-of-house." However, should the magazine use three "in-house" reviewers to provide the ratings, there is considerable risk of contamination. One reviewer might have been set to give a program a 94% when he discovers that his colleague thinks the game deserves a 62% and another colleague thinks it's a 57%. It is to be expected that the 94% might drop very quickly into, at least, the 70% range. "The rating would be blind," you say? An "in-house" reviewer would still know from the *reactions* of colleagues as they look at the game how they are receiving it.

Third, *CGW* readers tend to be voracious readers. Over and over again, we are told that they *read* our magazine from cover to cover. Numerical (or even icon-based) ratings tend to discourage reading. How many people would "waste" their time reading a review of a one-star game (or one that didn't manage to earn a "passing grade" on a 100-point scale)? Yet, one reviewer's 53% might be another person's 93% and the latter might *never* discover that game upon seeing that 53% rating.

Fourth, one push toward numerical ratings comes from our advertisers. Many of them have so much confidence in their products that they wish for a venue where they can "take on" their competition head-to-head and show everyone which product is best. Unfortunately, many of these marketing executives have not completely thought through the notion. Whereas Siskel & Ebert's "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down" in a movie review will be one of a multitude of evaluations for a film, there are only a few magazines where readers can gain impressions of a computer game. Such a "quick and dirty" means of "reviewing" a game could be devastating to a good product or misleading with regard to a bad product.

In the long run, we believe our readers are better served with the ratings provided by a larger sample and printed in the center of our magazine. Except for paiktographies (i.e. game-o-graphies) where one reviewer compares *all* the games in a given genre, those are the only ratings you'll see in *CGW*. **CGW**

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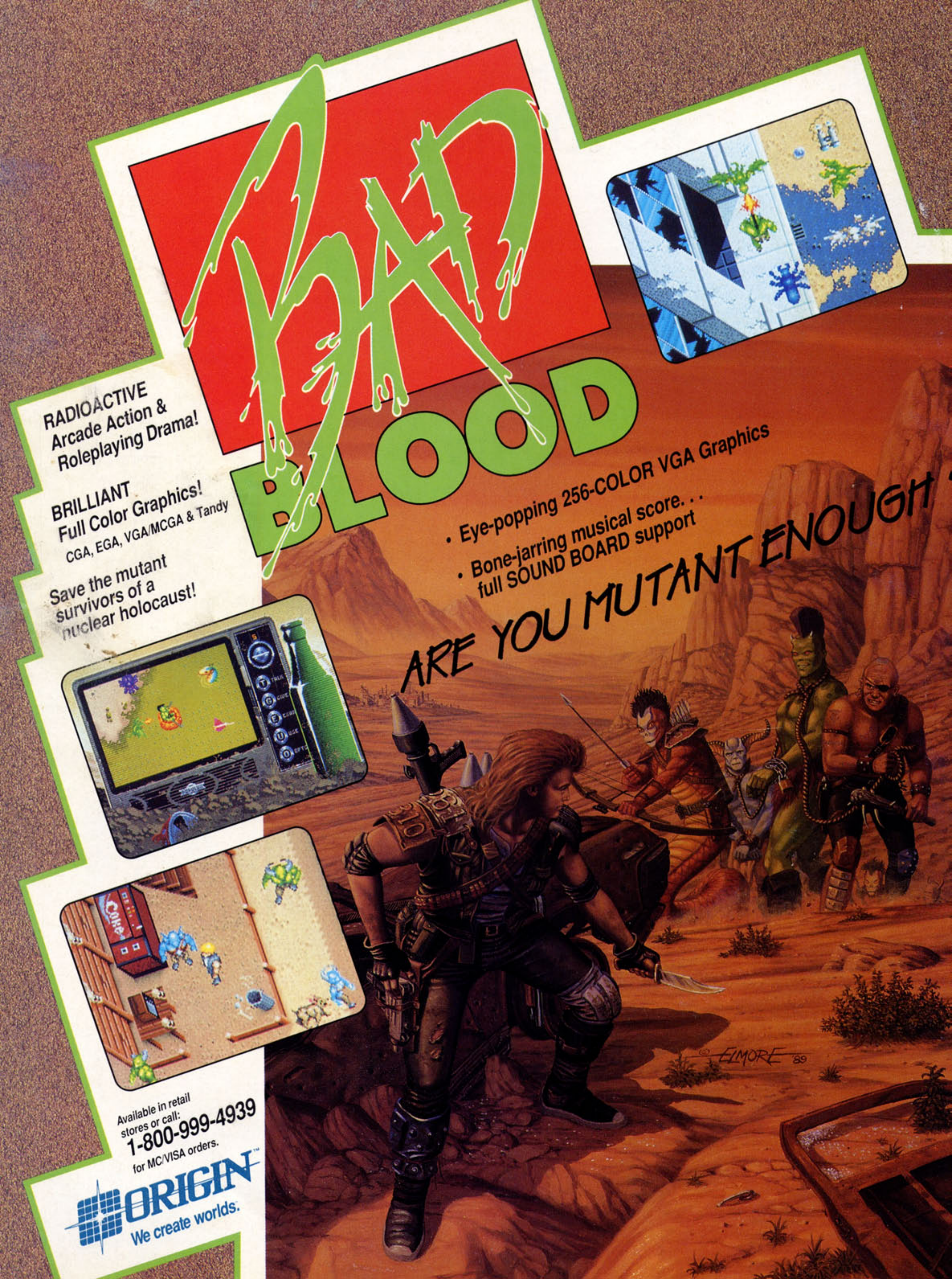
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